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LETTERS AND PAPERS OF JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

BY JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

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LETTERS AND PAPERS OF JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

HORATIO F. BROWN

WITH PORTRAIT

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PREFACE

It is now close on thirty years since Symonds died in Rome on the 19th of April, 1893. His name is still alive in the world of letters. The man and his work are still discussed in varying tones of sympathy or of dislike which bear witness to his vitality. It seemed, then, that a small selection from his copious correspondence might prove interesting and serve perhaps to deepen, maybe to modify, certainly to enlighten current opinion. Moreover, Symonds, by the accident of time, though hardly by his natural complexion, figures in a period which is attracting considerable attention, curiosity and comment, falling into the perspective from which it can be justly examined and portrayed, and incidentally these letters help to define and colour "the Victorian scene," though, to my mind, that is hardly their main import.

This volume has been compiled from Symonds's letters and papers. The letters are addressed chiefly to Henry Sidgwick and myself; this fact, while it implies a certain continuity of theme, and a certain unity of mental attitude, entails, perhaps,

some limitation of range. The papers are taken from Symonds's diaries, and from a series of literary fragments, which he styled "Fragmenta Litteraria," and, subsequently, privately printed or had type-written in three volumes, entitled "Miscellanies," the origin of which is explained in Letter No. 150. A few of the letters published in this volume have already been partially used by me in my "Biography" of Symonds; here they are given in fuller form.

Symonds was a most voluminous letter-writer. It is always a marvel to me how he found time for so much and such varied correspondence in the midst of his ceaseless output of books. The letters to Henry Sidgwick number at least four hundred, and those to myself well over two thousand, besides the stream of letters he was continually pouring forth to family, friends, artists and students, many of whom doubtless possess large collections of Symonds's letters, touching, with his extraordinary versatility and sympathy, on the various topics which mainly occupied their thoughts. Symonds was better in his letters than in his books, and better in his talk than in his letters, but of the latter no record remains save in the memory of his friends.

With such a mass of material to hand, it was necessary to select and edit. Some of the multifarious interests and occupations of Symonds's mind—such as the development of the "Demo-

cratic Idea," as observed by him—the author of those now famous and popular lines, "These things shall be," etc., which are included in every Socialist and Democratic hymnology—or the rise of the new school of psycho-analysis, the germs of which Symonds detected, and whose potential implications he divined in the theory of the "subliminal consciousness," when first launched upon the world of Cambridge—are but slightly recorded. My chief purpose in making this selection has been to present a portrait—not the only possible portrait, of course, no portrait is ever that—of a singularly interesting and even challenging personality. I have endeavoured to use the letters as a painter might use his colours, and, with that intent, the extracts are made to run on as continuously as possible, with the barest necessary indication of date and recipient. This method may have caused some loss of the specific quality we look for in letters, but I hope it has enhanced the quality of portraiture and heightened the homogeneity of the book.

Symonds belonged—in the category of time, at least—to what is now called the Victorian period, and in his relations with, and attitude towards the current thought and literature of his day he incidentally discloses much of his own individual nature, and we get, to some extent, a portrait of his mind, an idiosyncratic *animi figura* —to use the title of his own self-revealing series

of Sonnets. But he cannot strictly be considered as typical of his period. Ill-health, so prominent and formative a factor in his life, necessitating, as it did, almost continuous exile from England and from London, from the society of his social class and the conversation of his intellectual compeers, encouraged an independence of, and even an antagonism towards, current opinion and accepted standards which had its roots deep down in the anarchic complex of his nature, in the hidden roots of self, where the battle of his *dipsychia* was fought though never finished. A mind at quarrel with itself, seeking the adjustment and reconciliation of its aspirations and appetites with the environment in which it had to function. He died too soon to achieve this. Nevertheless, by birth, breeding, education and social status, Symonds was a part of "that small interior island of upper-middle-class civilization," which formed the backbone of the Victorian epoch; which took all life, and itself in particular, very seriously; occupied itself with problems which the present age may be inclined to thrust aside as solved or insoluble, but which will persist and recur, in some form or other, for the exercise, torment and delectation of certain temperaments as long as the mind remains what it is, as long as the cortex of the brain continues unchanged.

We commonly condemn such an introspective diathesis as morbid, and imply that, in the region

of psychology, scepsis is sepsis; and no doubt ill-health played a large part in the spiritual history of men like Rousseau, Amiel, Nietzsche; delicate instruments are easily thrown off balance. But in Symonds ill-health was conjoined with an astonishing fund of vitality, physical no less than mental, which manifested itself, outwardly, in an amazing *joie de vivre*. The elasticity of his complexion was demonstrated by the ceaseless cerebration which made his talk so brilliant a display of mental fireworks, no less than in the apparent ease with which he faced physical exertion, and undertook—invalid as he was—walks and climbs which would have tried many a younger and sounder man. His life, physical and mental, was in many ways a stimulating display of resolute courage and determination, "refreshing and invigorating," issuing, on the whole, in a singularly successful struggle against bodily weakness. This restless vitality made Symonds the charming, versatile, encouraging companion that he was. But the reactions were inevitable. He was subject to moods of depression, revealed only to his more intimate friends; they are true to the picture, though they must not be allowed to overcharge it with shadow. They sometimes produced an appearance of irritability and occasionally an effect of shrillness, not absent from the letters, which are, as he himself was, very much alive but sometimes very painful. Symonds would have

said that the two qualities are inseparables, and indeed, despite the nervous tension which wore him nearly threadbare, he remained extraordinarily young to the day of his death.

The portrait is the last taken of him. Writing to me on June the 28th, 1892, he says, "I will send you some new photos of myself, unbearded, one is decidedly good. I should like to go down to posterity with that apprehensive yet courageous look upon the wrinkled features. It has the merit of psychological veracity, this photograph."

HORATIO F. BROWN.

October 6th, 1922.
CHIGNOLO PO, PAVIA, ITALY.

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LETTERS AND PAPERS OF J. A. SYMONDS

1865.] [ÆT. 25

1.—MISCELLANIES. 29, *Welbeck St., W., Dec.* 8.

My father came to us this afternoon. He is going to dine with Woolner, to meet Tennyson, Gladstone and Holman Hunt. I am to go in the evening at 9.30.

When I arrived at Woolner's, the maid said she supposed I was "for the gentlemen." On my replying "Yes," she showed me into the dining-room, where they were finishing dessert. Woolner sat of course at the bottom of the table, Tennyson on his left, my father on his right hand. Gladstone sat next Tennyson and Hunt next my father. I relapsed into an arm-chair between Woolner and my father.

The conversation continued. They were talking about the Jamaica business — Gladstone bearing hard on Eyre, Tennyson excusing any cruelty in the case of putting down a savage mob. Gladstone had been reading official papers on the business all the morning and said, with an expression of intense gravity, just after I had entered, "And that evidence wrung from a poor black boy with a revolver at his head!" He said this in an orator's tone, pity mingled with indignation, the pressure of the lips, the inclination of the head, the lifting of the eyes to heaven, all marking the man's moral earnestness. He has a face like a lion's; his head is small above it, though the forehead is broad and massive, something like Trajan's in its proportion to the features.

Character, far more than intellect, strikes me in his physiognomy, and there is a remarkable duplicity of expression—iron, vice-like resolution combined with a subtle, mobile ingeniousness.

Tennyson did not argue. He kept asserting various prejudices and convictions. "We are too tender to savages; we are more tender to a black than to ourselves." "Niggers are tigers; niggers are tigers," in *obbligato*, *sotto voce*, to Gladstone's declamation. "But the Englishman is a cruel man—he is a strong man," put in Gladstone. My father illustrated this by stories of the Indian Mutiny. "That's not like Oriental cruelty," said Tennyson; "but I could not kill a cat, not the tomcat who scratches and miawls over his disgusting amours, and keeps me awake,"—thrown in with an indefinable impatience and rasping hatred. Gladstone looked glum and irate at this speech, thinking probably of Eyre. Then they turned to the insufficiency of evidence as yet in Eyre's case, and to other instances of his hasty butchery—the woman he hung, though recommended by court-martial, because women had shown savageness in mutilating a corpse. "Because *women*, not *the woman*—and that, too, after being recommended to mercy *by court-martial*, and he holding the Queen's commission!" said Gladstone with the same hostile emphasis. The question of his personal courage came up. That, said Gladstone, did not prove his capability of remaining cool under and dealing with such special circumstances. Anecdotes about sudden panics were related. Tennyson said to my father, "As far as I know my own temperament, I could stand any sudden thing, but give me an hour to reflect, and I should go here and go there, and all would be confused. If the fiery gulf of Curtius opened in the City, I would leap at once into it on horseback. But if I had to reflect on it, no—especially

the thought of death—nothing can be weighed against that. It is the moral question, not the fear, which would perplex me. I have not got the English courage. I could not wait six hours in a square expecting a battery's fire." Then stories of martial severity were told. My father repeated the anecdote of Bosquet in the Malakoff. Gladstone said Cialdini had shot a soldier for being without his regimental jacket. Tennyson put in, *sotto voce*, "If they shot paupers, perhaps they wouldn't tear up their clothes," and laughed very grimly.

Frank Palgrave here came in, a little man in morning dress, with short beard and moustache, well-cut features, and a slight cast in his eye, an impatient, unsatisfied look and some self-assertion in his manner. He directed the conversation to the subject of newspapers. Tennyson all the while kept drinking glasses of port and glowering round the room through his spectacles. His moustache hides the play of his mouth, but as far as I could see, that feature is as grim as the rest. He has cheek-bones carved out of iron. His head is domed, quite the reverse of Gladstone's—like an Elizabethan head, strong in the coronal, narrow in the frontal regions, but very finely moulded. It is like what Conington's head seems trying to be.*

Something brought up the franchise. Tennyson said, "That's what we're coming to when we get your Reform Bill, Mr. Gladstone; not that I know anything about it." "No more does any man in England," said Gladstone, taking him up quickly with a twinkling laugh, then adding, "But I'm sorry to see you getting nervous." "Oh, I think a state in which every man would have a vote is the ideal. I always thought it might be realized in England, if anywhere, with our constitutional history. But

* This is not uncommon with heads. They seem verging to some type which one attains better than another, various minute differences coming in to modulate the assimilation. (J. A. S.)

how to do it?" This was the mere reflector. The man of practice said nothing. Soon after came coffee. Tennyson grew impatient, moved his great gaunt body about, and finally was left to smoke a pipe. It is hard to fix the difference between the two men, both with their strong provincial accent—Gladstone with his rich flexible voice, Tennyson with his deep drawl rising into an impatient falsetto when put out; Gladstone arguing, Tennyson putting in a prejudice; Gladstone asserting rashly, Tennyson denying with a bald negative; Gladstone full of facts, Tennyson relying on impressions; both of them humorous, but the one polished and delicate in repartee, the other broad and coarse and grotesque. Gladstone's hands are white and not remarkable. Tennyson's are huge, unwieldy, fit for moulding clay or dough. Gladstone is in some sort a man of the world; Tennyson a child, and treated by him like a child.

Woolner played the host well, with great simplicity. His manner was agreeably subdued. Palgrave rasped a little. Hunt was silent. My father made a good third to the two great people. I was like a man hearing a concerto; Gladstone first violin, my father second violin, Tennyson violoncello, Woolner bass viol, Palgrave viola, and, perhaps, Hunt a second but very subordinate viola.

When we left the dining-room we found Mrs. Woolner and her sister, Miss Waugh (engaged to Holman Hunt), in the drawing-room. Both of these ladies are graceful. They affect the simplicity of pre-Raphaelite nature, and dress without crinoline very elegantly. Miss Waugh, though called "the goddess," is nowise unapproachable. She talked of Japanese fans like a common mortal. Mrs. Woolner is a pretty little maidenly creature who seems to have walked out of a missal margin

Woolner gave Gladstone a MS. book, containing translations of the "Iliad" by Tennyson, to read. Gladstone

read it by himself till Tennyson appeared. Then Woolner went to him and said, "You will read your translation, won't you?" And Palgrave, "Come you! A shout in the trench!" "No, I shan't," said Tennyson, standing in the room, with a pettish voice, and jerking his arms and body from the hips. "No, I shan't read it. It's only a little thing. Must be judged by comparison with the Greek. Can only be appreciated by the difficulties overcome." Then seeing the MS. in Gladstone's hand, "This isn't fair; no, this isn't fair." He took it away, and nothing would pacify him. "I meant to read it to Mr. Gladstone and Dr. Symonds." My father urged him to no purpose, told him he would be φωνοῦντα συνετοῖσιν; but he cried, "Yes, you and Gladstone, but the rest don't understand it." "Here's my son, an Oxford first-class man." "Oh, I should be afraid of him." Then my father talked soothingly in an admirable low voice to him, such as those who have to deal with fractious people would do well to acquire. He talked to him of his poems—"Mariana in the Moated Grange." This took them to the Lincolnshire flats—as impressive in their extent of plain as mountain heights. My father tried to analyse the physical conditions of ideas of size. But Tennyson preferred fixing his mind on the ideas themselves. "I do not know whether to think the universe great or little. When I think about it, it seems now one and now the other. What makes its greatness? Not one sun or one set of suns, or is it the whole together?" Then to illustrate his sense of size he pictured a journey through space like Jean Paul Richter's, leaving first one galaxy or spot of light behind him, then another, and so on through infinity. Then about matter. Its incognisability puzzled him. "I cannot form the least notion of a brick. I don't know what it is. It's no use talking about atoms, extension, colour, weight. I cannot penetrate the

brick. But I have far more distinct ideas of God, of love and such emotions. I can sympathise with God in my poor way. The human soul seems to me always in some way, how we do not know, identical with God. That's the value of prayer. Prayer is like opening a sluice between the great ocean and our little channels." Then of eternity and creation: "Huxley says we may have come from monkeys. That makes no difference to me. If it is God's way of creation, He sees the whole, past, present, and future, as one" (entering on an elaborate statement of eternity *à la* Sir Thomas Browne). Then of morality: "I cannot but think moral good is the crown of man. But what is it without immortality? 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' If I knew the world were coming to an end in six hours, would I give my money to a starving beggar? No, if I did not believe myself immortal. I have sometimes thought men of sin might destroy their immortality. The eternity of punishment is quite incredible. Christ's words were parables to suit the sense of the times." Further of morality: "There are some young men who try to do away with morality. They say, 'We won't be moral.' Comte, I believe, and perhaps Mr. Grote too, deny that immortality has anything to do with being moral." Then from material to moral difficulties: "Why do mosquitoes exist? I believe that after God had made His world the devil began and added something." (Cat and mouse—leopards.) (My father raised moral evil—morbid art.) The conversation turned on Swinburne for the moment, and then dropped.

In all this metaphysical vagueness about matter, morals, the existence of evil, and the evidences of God there was something almost childish. Such points pass with most men for settled as insoluble after a time. But Tennyson has a perfect simplicity about him which recognises the real greatness of such questions, and regards them

as always worthy of consideration. He treats them with profound moral earnestness. His "In Memoriam" and "Two Voices" illustrate this habit. There is nothing original or startling—on the contrary, a general commonplaceness, about his metaphysics; yet, so far as they go, they express real agitating questions—express, in a poet's language, what most men feel and think about.

A move was made into the dining-room. Tennyson had consented to read his translations to Gladstone and my father. I followed them and sat unperceived behind them. He began by reading in a deep bass growl the passage of Achilles shouting in the trench. Gladstone continually interrupted him with small points about words. He has a combative, House of Commons mannerism, which gives him the appearance of thinking too much about himself. It was always to air some theory of his own that he broke Tennyson's recital; and he seemed listening only in order to catch something up. Tennyson invited criticism.

Tennyson was sorely puzzled about the variations in Homeric readings and interpretations. "They change year after year. What we used to think right in my days I am told is all wrong. What is a poor translator to do?" But he piqued himself very much on his exact renderings. "These lines are word for word. You could not have a closer translation: one poet could not express another better. There! those are good lines." Gladstone would object, "But you will say Jove and Greeks: can't we have Zeus and Achæans?" "But the sound of Jove! Jove is much softer than Zeus—Zeus—Zeus." "Well, Mr. Worsley gives us Achæans." "Mr. Worsley has chosen a convenient long metre; he can give you Achæans, and a great deal else." Much was said about the proper means of getting a certain pause, how to give equivalent suggestive sounds, and so on.

Some of the points which rose between the recitations I will put down.

Τανύπεπλος.—My father asked why Gladstone translated this "round-limbed." He answered that he had the notion of "lateral extension" of the robe, since a long trailing dress was not Achæan, but Ionian. Homer talks of the Ionians, ἑλκεχίτωνες. Tennyson did not heed this supersubtle rendering, but said, "Ah! there's nothing more romantic than the image of these women floating along the streets of Troy with their long dresses flying out behind them. Windy Troy! I dare say it was not windier than other places, but it stood high, open to the air. As a schoolboy, I used to see them. A boy of course imagines something like a modern town."

Φυσίζοος αἶα.—My father instanced this as a curious fixed epithet, and incongruous for a burial-field of battle. Gladstone objected it was not a common epithet. He and Tennyson agreed in the pathos which it strikes by way of contrast with death. The exactness of Homer's epithets—not nearly so fixed and formal as supposed.

Γλαυκῶπις.—Tennyson translated this "grey-eyed," in the Shakespearean meaning of "blue-eyed." Gladstone said it ought to be "bright-eyed." Homer knew nothing about colours: the human eye had not yet learned to distinguish colours. Question raised whether it were not that the nomenclature of colours had not yet been perfected. Gladstone preferred to think that the sense itself had not been educated to perceive colours. It seemed as if Gladstone were a champion in the mediæval schools, throwing down theses and defending them for pure argument-sake, not for any real love of truth—a dangerous quality in a statesman, and apt to make him an untrustworthy debater.

Καλλίτριχες ἵπποι.—Tennyson translated "beauteous horses." He thought it meant sleek, etc.; might have

said "fair-haired," but wanted same quality of sound which "beauteous" had. Gladstone said, what had occurred to me, that καλλίτριχες was meant as a picturesque epithet, to describe the flowing mane of the horses as they stopped suddenly and turned, affrighted by the shout of Achilles. This seemed supersubtle.

Other points—

(1.) Gladstone said Virgil had misrepresented Homer intentionally; had used him, but altered, so that we could gain nothing from reading Homer in Virgil's light.

(2.) His deep meaning. Gladstone thought a special significance might be found in the list of Thetis' nymphs. They have pure Greek names, whereas Nereus was an old non-Hellenic Pelasgic god. Homer, Hellenising Thetis, the mother of his Greek hero Achilles, invents a train of pure Greek ladies for her. He never mentions Nereus by name, calls him "the old man," keeps him in the background. Is not this supersubtle? He was angry with Lord Derby for cutting up these names.

(3.) "Lord Derby's, not blank verse; prose divided into five beats." Said to have been improvised as the mood seized him, and wondered at by some people accordingly.

(4.) Could it be got into hexameters? Tennyson repeated some quantitative hexameters, "beastly bad," which he had made. English people could not understand quantity. "I showed 'em to a man, Allingham; he wanted to scan 'em; couldn't see they had quantity." Gladstone observed that modern Greek readings of Homer must be all wrong. We have lost accent, which was not emphasis, but arsis and thesis of voice. At end of word, *e.g.*, the grave becomes the acute, and the voice is raised. There are three parts in pronunciation: time, emphasis, and pitch.

Palgrave suggested a translation of Homer into Biblical prose. He began it. Jowett dissuaded him,

saying he thought he had not enough command of English. (How like Jowett!) "Rather disparaging to you," said Tennyson.

Tennyson said he had read out in old English to his wife the "Odyssey." "And it struck me I did it very well."

(5.) Real difficulty of translation. No two languages hit each other off. Both have some words "like shot silk" (Tennyson's metaphor, good). These cannot be rendered. We can never *quite* appreciate another nation's poetry on this account. Gave as an instance the end of "Enoch Arden," "Calling of the sea," a phrase well known to sailors, for a clear night with a sea-sound on the shore in calm. A German translator rendered it "Geschrei," which suggested storm, etc., wrongly. He meant a big voice of the sea, but coming through the calm. (The Venetian sailors, however, say "Chiama il mare.")

Gladstone, just before we parted, said he always slept well. He had only twice been kept awake by the exertion of a great speech in the House. On both occasions the recollection that he had made a misquotation haunted him.

At about one we broke up. Gladstone went off first. My father and I walked round the studio, then shook hands with Tennyson and got home.

2.—To H. S. 47, *Norfolk Sq., W., Aug.* 14.

I have been reading Noel's poems all this morning. I find in them a singular earnestness and purity of feeling. There are passages of real pathos, and a few of liquid beauty. But the general form is so rough hewn—the language is chosen so utterly at random—and all ordinary rules of grammatical expression and

development of thought are so wholly disregarded—that the poems as a whole are difficult to read. They do not allure. Noel is more rough and obscure than Browning, without the same sweep of thought or majesty of language. Browning is ore too; but Noel takes so very much smelting.

I am glad this volume never fell under my hands in the reviewing days. Its moral and intellectual excellences are not nearly so much upon the surface as its faults. The perusal of such a book makes me open once more the whole question about subaltern poets. Is it worth while spending time on writing verses which, with all their thought, feeling, and occasional gorgeousness of colour, are not first rate? Would it not be better to enjoy and do daily work? This is to me a home question. My inferiority in art to Noel strikes me; and yet here I have been versifying for a fortnight to the retardation of my recovery of health! None but the peaks of Parnassus ought to be trodden while we have the Greeks and Virgil and the Italians and Goethe and Schiller and our own five or six great ones. Tennyson and Browning get near the peaks. But for the crowd, developed or undeveloped into vocalism, what *raison d'être* is there? I relapse into criticism and translation and enjoyment with a calmer conscience, after seeing (to me) unattainable excellence in Noel, and yet admitting that the world could well have done without his articulations. But no sooner is this written than I remember the things I have to say, the poem of life which I should not like to die without expressing somehow, the excellences in another line which I can claim.

So I am, as usual, tossed between two opinions and left to the event of chance. Happy is the man who has hodman's work in some plain place of the world.

3.—To H. S. *Mentone*, [*Feb.* 26].

I would almost rather not have to tell you what I think of "The Angel in the House." I wish I could sum up my opinion of it in the one word "twaddle," and leave it there. But it is not twaddle. The book is written by a very clever man—a man of complete, if narrow, intellect, essentially mediocre but very good of its sort. Many thoughts are new, true, subtle and well expressed. The poetical form is wisely chosen and extremely well sustained. But for its languor and prolixity should I admire the work of art.

But here my praises stop. . . . What I object to is that Patmore has thought it necessary so to belaud marriage and has so failed to elevate his theme. . . . Is there not the sublime apostrophe to married Love in the "Paradise Lost" of that gigantic Philistine Milton? Are there not Imogen and Beethoven's Florestan? Then his view of love and life. Just take these four lines:

> We who are married, let us own
> A bachelor's chief thought in life
> Is, or the fool's not worth a groan,
> To win a woman for his wife.

Then I detest the false humility, the besotted blindness to fact, which makes him write such nonsense about woman's superiority over man in "The Parallel." It is not chivalrous, for in chivalry the man admired the woman's difference and did not quit his own pre-eminence—he admitted a dual power and was willing to waive his own. . . .

In a word, I have never felt more moved with indignation against any poem of equal goodness. For again I must admit that the fancy is often delicate, the descriptions true, the analysis of feeling subtle. It is the constant reiteration of the one common thought

"destined maid," "sweet girl," etc., etc., etc. Oh! how I do loathe the comfortable commonplaces, the turgid Toryism of the whole life described—oily, sanctimonious, self-engrossed. I prefer Walt Whitman's dualism—the stern precepts of St. Paul about marriage—the passion of Romeo and Juliet, and then to leave the rest unsaid, for privacy and the mysteriousness of daily life.

Mentone, Feb. 26, 1868.

What I feel about Patmore I scribbled down so hurriedly and petulantly that I hardly like to send it. It sounds *sanglant*, and seems a reflection on the taste of better men. But I will favour you with the fragment in all humility. You have marked the best poem of the volume—"Love in Tears." That is very good and beautiful. How ridiculous it is to storm so against a man who can write *that!* But I could not help it.

4.—To H. S. *Bordighera, March* 3.

A letter of yours followed me hither. You say truly that when people talk of "Hell" they often mean a state of their nerves. Is there anything after all that is not a mode of the human nervous system—at least to human beings? If not, then when I talk of "Hell," I use, as my ancestors for many hundreds of generations, a convenient symbol.

"The Professor" * is far more interesting and of higher—more varied—literary merit than "The Autocrat." Holmes goes up a whole form after reading "The Professor." You call him an American Sterne. This is good. But he is more genuine and truly feeling than Sterne. His pathos does not flow so much like an

* Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Professor at the Breakfast Table."

ichor from his own soft sentiment, but rather gushes like a clear spring from the flinty rock of human nature and necessity. "Iris" is a beautiful creation. "Little Boston" perhaps even more distinct; yet a little too much melodramatic machinery about him.

. . . . .

I have learned that for Life a square is needed: Health, Home, Occupation, Faith or Philosophy. You can get on without 1 or 2 or even 3. But if you are destitute of all four woe to you. The one most easily dispensed with is Home: for the affections may elsewhere be satisfied. Next I think Faith and Philosophy may be got rid of, for a man of good health and fully occupied time is not likely to be plagued about the Universe until past work. If Health goes, then Faith and Philosophy acquire vast importance. Health is the ὕλη of Happiness, occupation in some sense its energy. They are reciprocal and imply each other. The one which can support life by itself alone is the last—a proof perhaps of man's essentially spiritual nature. But the pyramid of Life ought to be based on all four.

5.—To H. S. *Bordighera, March* 22.

How long it is since I wrote to you! I have not much to say, for I have been non-convalescent, head worrying and foot lingering; altogether in a state of decadence and dismals.

It is odd, however, that in this low condition good things come by fits and flashes. It always touches me in the Alps to see spring flowers coming up in midsummer on the edge of melting avalanches, foretelling their ultimate disappearance and asserting the eternity of life upon the verge of death. I cannot read a serious book or think continuously or act like a rational animal or sustain a conversation. But verses come at intervals

and beg to be written down. I have composed a Greek rhyming dream called "Lysis" . . . as well as minor scraps of song. I will write you out a version of St. Bernard's passionate Hymn to the Head of Christ. It is free, but I have nearly maintained the metre of the original. The 5th and 10th lines of each stanza in the Latin change their rhythm from Trochaic to Iambic; I have not ventured on this, English seeming to me so much less fluid and plastic than rhyming Latin; but I might, by the introduction of one syllable in each of these lines, easily produce the exact effect. In about four weeks we hope to get into Lombardy, and soon after the middle of May to cross the Brenner and reach Salzburg and the Austrian Alp-Lakes.

SALVE CAPUT CRUENTATUM.

Hail to Thee! Thou head of mourning!
Crowned with thorns, for pain and scorning!
Mocked and bleeding, torn and wounded,
Spat upon, with foes surrounded,
Bruised and broken with the rod!
Hail to Thee! whose light is shrouded,
Kingly lustre over-clouded;
Lo! Thy flower of beauty pining!
Thou, before whose awful shining
Hosts of Heaven adore their God!

All Thy youth and bloom are faded:
Who hath thus Thy state degraded?
Death upon Thy face is written—
See the wan worn limbs, the smitten
Breast upon the cruel tree!
Thus despised and desecrated,
Thus in dying desolated;
Slain for me of sinners vilest,
Loving Lord, on me Thou smilest:
Shine, sweet head, and strengthen me!

In Thy passion do not scorn me,
Gentle Shepherd, who hast borne me;
From whose mouth I drank the healing
Draught of milk and honey stealing,
Sweeter than all sweets that be:

I am vile ; yet do not spurn me !
From Thy face Thou shalt not turn me !
While the shades of death are closing,
Lean upon my breast, reposing
Thy dear head and hands on me !

Oh, to share with Thee the anguish
Of Thy passion ! oh, to languish
On Thy cross, to die beside Thee !
In Thy wounds, O Saviour, hide me ;
Let me love and die with Thee !
To Thy bitter death and tender,
Dearest Lord, this praise I render :
Thou art merciful and righteous—
Hear Thy servant's prayer, be piteous
At the last, and comfort me !

When the time is near for dying,
Listen to my lonely crying !
In that dreadful hour delay not !
Jesu, come ! be quick and stay not !
Shield me, save and set me free !
When from earth my soul is bidden,
Let not then Thy face be hidden !
Lover whom 'tis life to cherish,
Shine and leave me not to perish !
Show Thy cross and succour me.

6.—To H. S. *Monaco, March* 30.

It was only to-day that, on going into Mentone, I found your letters of the 7th and 20th. I am very glad to have them and fear my silence must have seemed the stranger to you as you were writing yourself. (However, I did recently send one letter and a version of St. Bernard's Hymn.)

Bordighera, since you ask me, was in this wise: a promontory jutting into the sea; at the end of which we lived and saw the whole coast—the mountains above Mentone, peaked and broad-backed masses stretching from the snow of the Alps down to the Testa di Cane above Monaco; Antibes and the Esterels behind them further out to sea. At night one saw the lanterns of

Villafranca and the blazing iniquity of Monaco and the faint pile of Mentone lights with their long reflections on the sea-bord. There were groves of palms and a great tract of rich olive ground, paved with narcissus, anemone, tulips and the white "Fior di morte" which we call periwinkle. In these we wandered after our fashion—I on donkey back; for my sprain, far from being a portion or parcel of the dreadful past, belongs to the living present. But Bordighera is of the Past.

We came to Monaco with the Norths who are on their way to England. It is good being here—the best and quietest hotel in the whole country and the most beautiful place. I, however, am as idle as a jelly fish. I hobble out into the garden on the cliff and smoke cigarettes in moderation and watch sea-gulls on the solid blue waves below or swallow-tail butterflies—such huge, swift-darting, golden beauties—on the wing among the geranium and iris flowers. I dream and watch the apparition of Corsica, a pink-white film of snowy fields and dim arêtes upon the sea line . . . or I hear the orchestra of the Casino—waifs of Meyerbeer and Strauss with a few brief snatches of Bach and Beethoven. Or I amass treasures of Balzac. Or I split the fine, feeble hairs of Clough's thought. ("What did Clough die of?" "Oh! milk and water on the brain, of course!" This I heard the other day.) Or I weigh in vacillating balances Marc Antonine against Thomas à Kempis, the "Im Ganzen, Guten," etc., against the "To me to live," etc. . . . And perhaps you now think I am healthily animalizing. No indeed! Less and less. And if I do not return to England it is because I have no rest for the sole of my foot or for my mind.

7.—To H. S. [*Monaco*], *April* 1.

I want to see the Lucretius poem of A. T. When it appears send it me. I have heard so much about it from people who have read the MS. or heard him spout it that I expect great things. In my next you shall have Courthope's last poem—"Religio Lampadis."

Can you say three or four words about "Dipsychus"—what is its *dernier mot?* What is the point of juncture between the first part and the fragment of the second? I cannot make out whether D. is very shallow or very profound, whether it means almost nothing or is the cream of everything.

8.—To H. S. *Pisa, April* 24.

I am ashamed of myself.

Since I wrote last I have been wandering in Corsica. At Ajaccio I was laid up with a congestion of the lungs—a worse cold than I have ever had, I think. But after getting over the first of this I enjoyed myself greatly in strange mountain scenes and some of the finest coast landscape that I have ever seen. I do not feel up to writing about these things. Scenery and description are not our grooves. We are now *en route* for Venice, *via* Bologna and Ferrara and Padua.

Courthope, who has been travelling in Corsica with us, is full of the gall of bitterness against the Apostles of Swinburnism and of enthusiasm—almost equally. . . . I told you that Swinburne would come to inflame young men into follies of inordinate vices. Are we to be Heraclitus or Democritus now-a-days?

I think I had better not have Buchanan.* When I come back I shall read him with interest. But now I am chiefly in old and odd literature—Corsican poems and novels and the "Orlando Furioso."

* "The Fleshly school of poetry."

9.—To H. S. *Venice, May* 14.

Yours of the 8th has come, but not "Lucretius." I am very vexed to have lost this poem. Perhaps by making a row at the Post I shall get it disinterred from a limbo of forgotten newspapers. But I am sure that a great many of one's letters, etc., are lost.

You do not write in the best spirits, and you say you have never felt scepticism really till now. I do not believe that any man who is healthy and active can know the pinch of scepticism—what there is wretched and weak and morbid in it. Life is so good a thing to the strong, that no despair about the essence underlying its pleasing shows can make them valueless. It is only when the phantasmagoria of the world becomes sickly or menacing that the intolerable burden of not knowing Whence, Where, Whither, How, etc., makes itself oppressive. I have been for so long like a softer kind of Leopardi that I long to say with sincerity:

> "Or poserai per sempre,
> Stanco mio cor. Perì l'inganno estermo,
> Ch' eterno mi credei. Perì. ben sento,
> In noi di cari inganni,
> Non che la speme, il desiderio è spento.
> Posa per sempre. Assai
> Palpitasti."

But this kind of meditation is apt to be sentimental. You will, I know, be glad to hear my head is stronger—not strong. I read Italian poetry—20,000 odd lines of golden Ariosto, Tasso, Dante, Tassoni, and more modern singers. If I ever get capable of anything I should like to write an English history of Italian poetry. Our poetry and theirs are twin sisters and the rest are all outside.

My Clough studies are likely to come to something. Mrs. C. writes that Macmillan wants to publish

the "Remains" and she asks me to help her in editing them.

It will be (thank goodness) impossible for us to leave England again;—and I think most likely we shall take a house at Clifton and try to live there. London will be out of the question.

Your essence of the *Saturday Review* on Walt Whitman is pungent. I shall put on such armour as I have and go into the lists when I come home. Not to publish. I dare say, if I please myself, I shall print. Courthorpe and I, anxious to appear and ill at ease with the organs, talk of printing in concert. But . . .

10.—To H. S. [*Venice.*]

I did the voluptuous verse of "Lucretius" full justice, for I read it in my gondola as we glided by the Ducal Palace and beneath the bridges of St. Mark's. It is splendid in rhythm and in language, perhaps the most splendid of all Tennyson's essays in blank-verse, and the most gorgeously coloured piece of unrhymed English since Milton. But I do not like it as a poem. The drama is undramatic. Its action is slow and rotatory, not swift, simple, straightforward, like tiger-leaps or lightning-flashes, as it ought to be. The *φροντίδων ἐπιστάσεις* and ejaculations, which are introduced to give a dramatic ring to the poem, strike one as stiff and frigid, ill-jointed and not projected at a jet. The whole is very pictorial, a symbol of our modern poetry; which has absorbed the spirit of the picturesque and which is like a bit of Watts in words. It agreed singularly with the splendid sensualities of Veronese and Titian and Giorgione. The picture of the Nymph and Satyr translated itself at once for me into the language of Venetian lights and colours, the flying forms, divinely,

bestially nude; the sturdy growth of laurels and the "million myrtled wilderness," the golden glare of level sunset, parting burnished leaves from purple gloom and rounding the white limbs that fled, the shaggy limbs that followed, and glowing in eager eyes and gilding thick tressed coils of hair. There is great power in that passage about the nymph. I think Tennyson has never risen to so high a pitch of mere artistic excellence. The pseudo-simplicity of the Prologue and Epilogue is ludicrous, especially when it breaks out into the elaborate physiology of the "wicked broth" bit. But what transcendent lines there are :—

> "A riotous confluence of watercourses" . . .
> "Ruining along the illimitable inane" . . .

and the piece about the placid gods and the sunrise, and the repose of philosophic life. They make me fancy that we moderns, with tamer fancy and feebler thought, have a better trick of versifying than Milton or Shelley. With the purity of Italian literature in my mind, I see how decadent and autumnal, how over-ripe and without germ of future growth, is this gorgeous foliage of our poetic vineyard.

11.—To H. S. *Mürren, June* 21.

I found up here a letter of yours which had been at Milan, Cadenabbia, Luzern and Gründelwald. I do not know whether twice crossing the Alps improves the quality of letters as it may do of wines; but certainly yours was very acceptable and I should have been sorry not to have received it.

Perhaps by this time you are out of scepticism and in McCosh. So I will not discuss that part of your letter—

except to say that I think you hit the most intolerable part of the world's riddle in the eternity *a parte ante.* But it oppresses me just as much if I try to imagine no God as if I try to state the absurdity of a God emerging from somnolence into world-creative activity. I wish I could, like you, embrace Positivism as ἐμοὶ βέλτιον. It is just what I could not do. I feel that the instant I endeavour to take the ἐμοὶ and not the ἁπλῶς point of view I resent the attempt to impose upon myself. No healthy reaction takes place, but I am thrown back upon a moral helplessness inclining to materialism, and to the feeble hope (yearly more vain) of perhaps living so as to enjoy myself without doing any positive harm.

Then again, as to wickedness; your inclined plane is a just statement; but what is to arrest one on this plane, and (from another point of view) why should I seek to be arrested? . . . I am here in the same see-saw as about Scepticism, and end in the same temporizing, modified by an agonizing sense of there being somewhere a clear truth—a something ἁπλῶς and not ἐμοὶ or even πόλει, but plain and unmistakable when once perceived.

Is there any chance of our seeing each other soon after I get back (to London)? I want very much to see you if only to remove the nightmare recollection of those Cannes days when I could not talk to you.

If you write send me a line to the Bellevue, Neuchâtel, where I expect to be on the 30th of this month. If not, and if I do not by chance see you in London, write to Clifton Hill House, Bristol.

The Alps are as good, and I am as sentimental about them as ever.

12.—To H. S. *Mürren, June 24.*

The golden days that you speak of were so very gilded that I hardly dare to believe in them, and then to think of the squalor of loveless long interminable months of lead. But the gold turns up again in a rich vein when we least expect, and I suppose one must have patience. To attempt any artificial reconstruction of what was fortuitously good, is silly. But I wonder whether something could not be managed for our meeting soon.

I am a guest now in my father's house: this is not said against him, but I suppose that after marriage it must be so. Therefore I cannot ask you to come and stay with us when we get to Clifton without finding out what his plans and wishes are. But do you think, if I find it will suit, that you could come?

If you do walk in Switzerland and if you have not been here, pray make a point of seeing Mürren. I was six weeks in this inn five years ago, and many of the days were gilded. You will not get glacier-, but good grass-walking, and a very fine panoramic mountain, the Schilthorn, immediately above you to climb. I am glad you saw Courthope. . . . He has an excellent and sober judgment, strong prejudices, and an inexhaustible fund of humour. He is a most refreshing companion, never tiring you with fretful activity or the heaviness of his intellect, but flowing at an even level in a good full stream. You find that he has ways of his own of looking at things, that he is perfectly spontaneous, that he rhymes with singular felicity and that there is a good, unquarried mass of raw material in him. Much of his Spenser Essay drags in reading, but then there is not a single sentence of artificial flummery—no Tainism—and the taste and insight into poetry are both uncommon. I should not

wonder if he eventually proved a better critic of poetry than a poet. Meanwhile he sniffs a little at Tennyson. This is refreshing in its coolness. It is also refreshing to find a young man who genuinely prefers Crabbe to Swinburne and knows why.

It always pleases me immensely to be talked to about myself. This is a cynical piece of vanity: but also I hope it is not: because I really seek to learn from what is said. How am I to learn to give my style "good down-strokes"? If I try to insist I become verbose and prolix. But it is pleasant to hear that any one thinks I have a style. Now I feel so often as if I could not write three words together that I sink into gloom you cannot, probably, appreciate.

My chief difficulty in writing proceeds from a nervous irritability of the brain. I scratch and scrimmage through my work with a constant pressure on the forehead and a fear that, if the pen be once laid aside, sleeplessness and a cerebral erethism will prevent my taking it up again. In this way I acquire a habit of hurry which my "fatal fluency" encourages. I used always to write my *Saturday Review* articles at a sitting, under three hours. At one time this rapidity pleased me with a sense of improvisation. But now I envy the man who can (even if he also has to) plod for eight hours, and to plod again the next day, remodelling and reconstructing, till his labour has told upon the stubborn stuff in hand. . . .

I fear I do not see the difficulty as clearly as I ought. But I suppose what you mean is this: how does the human consciousness come to distinguish one object from another, and not to confuse all in a chaos of simultaneous sensations? This seems to me the same as asking: how do men come at all to perceive intelligently, to be conscious of the multiplicity of things? It is seeking to analyze the primitive fact of perception; for if we always

perceived all things *en masse*, we should actually perceive nothing, and every moment of our lives, supposing us to be nevertheless conscious, would be an eternity. I should be satisfied with going no further back than practical tactile experience and memory. A baby seems to see all things as one and in one plane; then he gets an object into his hand and remembers that as a single thing, separable from other things. His memory in that early age is, even for single objects, unlimited and as tenacious as a vice. The gradual education of the race must be taken into account to explain how this perception of divisible objects is facilitated. Every baby must inherit ancestral experience in these rudiments to a large extent. But I know that this answer is quite unsatisfactory. I am a pure sceptic and feel helpless about everything. Things are.

13.—To H. S. *Clifton, July 6.*

I am not so patriotic here in England as I ought to be—rather inclined to grumble at the food and the locomotion of my country. But this is a passing pettishness, and I am really happy to be here.

Your remarks on Clough are very interesting. I quite agree with you about the 2nd part. If it means no more than is on the face of it, I cannot but judge it shallow. In that case it makes me feel queer about the intention of the whole—even of the first part. So I too have suspended my judgment and go seeking a *vates* to interpret it. In the 2nd part of Easter Day there is something like that same descent to commonplace. Clough, I think, seems often subtler than Goethe because he cared less for the art of the thing and felt more deeply. Goethe always had an eye to the *mise en scène* and to the large varieties of human life. Clough was content

to be untheatrical and to dissect a portion of the troubled brain of a single man. I do not think Goethe could have written "Dipsychus"; but I also think he would not have cared to do so. Now I could not have written it, but I should care to have done so. It is odd how even this poem is now behind the age. Its handling of religious and sexual matters is quite timid.

You ask about Shakspere's Alexandrines and speak of Fletcher's. I am not sure which of the latter's you allude to. All the Dramatists allowed themselves this licence in Dialogue, and Shakspere too. See the conversation between Hamlet and the Queen:

> "To whom do you speak thus?
> Do you see nothing there?"

or

> "And reason panders will.
> O Hamlet, speak no more!"

These are incorrigible Alexandrines, which do not offend my ear because of the change of speaker, which makes a pause and breaks the chain of sound. But here is surely a true Alexandrine—

> "What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?"

Shakspere's ear was very fine, and he rarely wrote anything ungraceful; so that here we find some mitigation of the languor in the repetition of a quick-vowelled proper name. Webster has fine Alexandrines: here is one, I think, remarkable for its grandeur:

> "The heavens o'er my head seem made of molten brass."

You may read it as a decasyllable by tiger-leaps of desperate gasping: but I prefer to drop the syllables drearily.

What is really strange is that Milton has one in the "Paradise Lost" (viii. 216)—

> "Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety."

But here the cadence of the foregoing period has been so perfectly sustained to the end of the word "Imbued," that the reader must make a pause, and finish Adam's speech with a full line.

I am not certain whether Milton here made a slip in writing or whether he purposely used the dramatic license. There is a similar line in the same book (316) where the period ends at the second syllable of a line, and then a new line, as it were, is begun, to continue the sense. But this line is not an Alexandrine: it requires to be read rapidly as in prose.

I am sitting up after bedtime against orders. So good night.

14.—To H. S. *Clifton, July* 25.

It is rather late to return to the metrical question: but I want to say that I do think the line

"Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety"

is an Alexandrine pure and simple. I do not understand your *slur* of the vowels in "satiety"; and I find the universal usage of English poets has been to make it a quadrisyllable. Here are some instances:

"Satiety of sleep and love, satiety of ease."
Chapman's "Homer."

"And pleased them all with meek satiety."
Spenser.

"A mere satiety of commendation."
"Timon of Athens," i. i.

"And with sătī|ětў sēēks | to quench his thirst."
"Taming of the Shrew," i. i.

"To melt in full satiety of grief."
Pope.

"Thou lovest but ne'er knew love's glad satiety."
Shelley.

As to the line about "Hecuba" you are clearly right; the three syllables of "Hecuba," in their brevity, stand for two. Do you, however, think we can talk of dactyls or spondees or anapæsts in English? I do not feel quantity to be a fact in our prosody; but only a proportion of syllables which is a kind of rudimentary and undeveloped quantity. Miss Evans's Alexandrines are quite unpardonable—purely gratuitous too in the case of such lines as these:

"His particoloured vest, tight fitting, and his hose."

The whole versification of the "Spanish Gypsy" is very tame; but I think it a noble production, Shaksperian in its sense of character, spiritual situations, in some of its Polonius-like world-wisdom, in its deep-diving similes. It is worthy to stand on the shelf with "Romola" and "Felix Holt," the conception of a Fate in the blood being so true in itself, so nobly wrought, so tragical in its consequences, and so productive of the highest heroism and most lamentable vain flutterings against impalpable barriers. The poem has affected me too much to let me speak about it as I would. But, as for the half-shadows, and the less prominent figures of its basrelief, how exquisite a creation is Juan, how delicate are Pablo and Hinda!

I have read very little except German for the good of my mind; and the German has been Heine's "Reisebilder." It is a very amusing book, certainly, and of a good style. But his particular humour in which so much absolute filth is mingled with faded rose-leaves on the one side and satiric stinging nettles on the other, with exquisite lyrical interbreathings of the true poet and many wise remarks, wearies me. I like the "Hartz-Reise" best of all. It is so fresh, the joy of the woods is so strong and unaffected in it, and the humorous picture

of the Brocken supper and of the two young men who mistook a clothes cupboard for a window opening on moon and mountain, is natural. Next, I think, I like the satire on Platen: because it is so genuine and unmixed in its antique abusiveness.

15.—To H. S. *Clifton, Aug.* 28.

I was pleased to have your letter from Courmayeur. Mine is essentially a localizing imagination, and I like to know of my friends being *en rapport* with scenes which have stirred me. I believe that as one grows in taste one gets to be fonder of the picturesque. In the midst of a barren and desolate country, however grand, of rock and glacier, there remain so many parts of the soul unsatisfied. Contrast is so large a part of the highest pleasure. But I have not lost the sense of the pure sublime. The chain of Mont Blanc as seen from the Brevent, Monte Rosa from the Moro Pass, the Ortler from the Stelvio, the Jungfrau from the Wengern Alp, these are the views which have finally impressed me most and most enduringly. But all these views are from heights, of mountains tolerably distant, and generally with a vast intervening space of air and chasm. Some of the sublime views terrify me. I remember walking from Courmayeur up the Allée Blanche and, when close to upon the Lac du Combal, something up the huge moraine of the Miage Glacier—alone. At the top of its hideous ridge I almost fainted from the intolerable sense of ruthless inanimate frozen force with which the sight of that gloomy glacier mass below inspired me. Very often since I have dreamed a nightmare of that moment. One of the charms of being in the Alps is that you get so much merely by "a wise passiveness." It is at once the most sedative and the most exciting scenery.

I am disgusted by the general tone of people and papers about the "Spanish Gypsy." It is too late now; or I should have liked to express myself upon that poem. Critics rush so rapidly into print that they present the public with a crude and first-sight impressions; whereas the "Spanish Gypsy" at all events requires a good deal of calm consideration.

I have corresponded with Rossetti about Walt Whitman. He has sent me a piece of Orson's handwriting, and is generally gratified to find in me an intelligent admirer. I have written a *Quarterly* article on Clough, taking in three Lectures and the religious Love—and Action—poems. Mrs. Clough has the MS. She wants me to try and get it into the *Quarterly* (but I am sure Smith would mangle or excise the religious part) or the *North British*. I would prefer the *Westminster* or *Fraser*.

16.—To H. S. *Hastings, Sept.* 21.

Froude has my article on Clough; but I doubt his doing anything with it, and Mrs. C. would not object to the *Westminster* after all. She is here and we are beginning to think about re-writing C.'s life. Have you any suggestions as to *desiderata*? I want her to throw more light on the Oxford period and on Clough's want of leisure owing to poverty; also to bring out clearly the value of his *faithful Scepticism*. Jowett, in a remarkable letter about him, says he was a man who "walked by faith." The World accuses him of destructive scepticism, and his faith was the sincerity of his scepticism —a sincerity much needed now when Scepticism is apt to become atonic, immoral or careless.

I had some interesting talk about him (*i.e.* Clough) with Norton, the American Editor of the *North Atlantic*

Review, who is now staying in England, and whom I met at Ravensbourne where the Bonham-Carters live. He, as a clear-sighted Bostonian, can appreciate Clough more calmly in his relation to the recent currents of religious and social thought in England than most of our critics. I found Norton very unappreciative of Walt Whitman. He thinks Lowell the first American poet. About Tennyson he and I agree, especially as to "Lucretius." By the way, I will send you some notes I wrote for the *P.M.G.* (but of course fruitlessly and foolishly, for they had long ago published on the other side of the question) about the *morality* of "Lucretius." Please return the paper; for I may perhaps work it up into some other article. Goldwin Smith was with us, and he seemed bitter against Tennyson: "his poems are a sort of intellectual cigars"—this was the epigrammatic outcome of *his* criticism.

17.—To H. S. *Clifton, Jan.* 13.

Please come here on the 16th—Saturday, which sounds sooner. If anything happens to make it better for you not to be in this house, there will be Graham's and my father's—both at no very great distance.

I agree with you about that article in the *Spectator*. But the fact is that my paper was rather morbid and *tête-montée*. It was written more about what I had felt and found of and for myself in de M[usset] than about him as a poet. So I see some points which he has made against me—if points they can be called where point is none—for a more un-take-hold-of-able article I never read. But he was insincere, I am inclined to believe, in what he said both about De M.'s religion and Rolla. It is simply preposterous to say that Rolla overdoes the "romantic picture of childish innocence." Marion occurs,

a sort of type of a kind of innocence, in the midst of horrors to intensify the horrors. She is a rose in the teeth of a skeleton, making one think of the dry bony skull. The real object of the piece is to exhibit the results of Voltairism *et hoc genus omne*—the spirit of the *siècles sans foi, sans espoir* and *sans crainte* of which he so often talks. Even Rolla at the last will only apostrophize her sleep—the "*sommeil*" which has not lost its innocence, which he has not bought. I was angered at this audacious mis-statement—the writer of the article seemed to think he could make it with safety, relying on the impossibility of any one analyzing Rolla so as to tell the public his mistake. The *real* picture of romantic innocence in a similar situation is that of Marina in "Pericles." She *is* innocent.

The "Ring and the Book" improves. The 2nd Vol. is infinitely best. What you say about the Preface spoiling one for the rest—just as you taste some nasty things all through the good wines and meats that succeed in a banquet—is so true that I had the greatest difficulty in trying to do my duty of faithfully appreciating the volume. Balzac is always superior even in his tediousness because, as you observe, he gives a foretaste and aroma of feeling—a suspicion (*e.g.* at the beginning of the *Cousine Bette*) of impending tragedy or a perfume (as in Beatrice) of sentiments to be disclosed. But his mere accumulative, anatomical method—his habit of laying deep and broad foundations of brick and rubble for crystal pyramids of frozen fire to stand upon—in that I thought he resembled Browning. With Balzac the fire of the pyramid often heats the bricks even red hot, so that they glow and become scarcely distinguishable from the divine superstructure. Enough of this gloss on your sentences.

18.—To H. S. *Bristol, May 7.*

I left London this day last week and came to Sutton Court where I have been until to-day. We are now occupying my father's house in his absence while my own is getting itself furnished. At Sutton Court I discovered my book of Sonnets in a corner of my portmanteau, where James had carelessly left it when he unpacked for me after Cambridge. I am very sorry to have troubled you about it, though my anxiety to find the little book was real.

As to "Evan Harrington" which you so kindly talk of sending me—I think this will hardly be worth while. I shall borrow Graham's "Ordeal" and read that. If it takes the hold on me which I expect, I shall probably somehow buy the books.

The return to Clifton is trying. This place is full of vague yet powerful associations which I cannot put aside—some dating, I think, from my 9th or 10th year—so that the very trees and streets seem saying to me, "Put on your spirit the dress which we have woven for you; you will have to wear it whether you like it or not." Alas! London I do regret with its largeness. There it is so much easier to be a piece of the Universe, to feel the stars above and the pismires beneath and all in their proper places.

19.—To H. S. *Clifton, May 17.*

We are still exiles from our house which is at present a chaos. The movers of my goods have lost about 3 cwt. of my favourite books—ingeniously selected from the beginnings or ends of editions. Whether I shall recover them I cannot yet tell. They could not be

replaced in any true sense of the word; and to replace them at all would cost me about £40.

I have finished "Richard Feverel." I kept constantly telling myself that this novelist is a poet, and when I came to the chapter called "An Enchantress," I felt that the XIXth Century was ever so far ahead of the Elizabethans. Suddenly I remembered that these were both *your* ideas. Indeed the man affects me terribly. I quite see why, in spite of his being one of our greatest novelists, he is not read. The sense of pain produced by R. F. is intense. My mind ached at passages. I was stifled and had to stop reading. Even Balzac does not so affect me; for Balzac is more scientific on the one side and more *in* his subject on the other. What is terrible about G. M. is that he feels it as a poet and stands apart from it as an ironic showman. There is a great want of truth, verisimilitude rather, about some of the characters. I do not realize Sir Austin or indeed Richard except as a Picture. Please send me E. H. now.

20.—To H. S. *Clifton, Sept.* 5.

I came back yesterday. I am the better for my journeying, though I had very bad weather—only 12 fine days out of 5 weeks and 3 days, the rest determined deluge. We (Norman Moor) were at Mürren first: then we went over Grimsel and Furca and down St. Gotthard to the Maderanerthal. There we had 5 days' steady downpour. As far as I could judge of its scenery I was disappointed. Both Arthur and Kitchener had praised it greatly to me: but it is straggly, out at elbows, forlorn and ill-composed, wanting in all those elements of beauty which the Oberland and Monte Rosa Valleys have made me look upon as indispensable. In that Thal we met four

very pleasant English ladies whom I shall not forget. They were all unconventional, travelling alone. From thence we went to the lake of Lucerne and stayed first at a new inn on the base of the Frohn Alp—a superb site, then on the Rigi Scheideck. Afterwards, in dismal weather and despair of doing any good, we removed to Engelberg and made a dash at Titlis which ended in a tremendous and grandiose thunderstorm at 4 a.m., at the edge of his topmost glacier. It was very superb and awful to see the lightning darting through the clouds above the ice and to hear the melancholy wind wailing from peak to peak and the leaden-coloured light of dawn upon the snowfields: but I caught a bad cold which I brought back with me.

One funny incident happened at Mürren. Myers talked to me before Norman about his story of Rollo and then gave me the manuscript. After I went to bed I read the MS. out loud and made very free comments on it. Half-way through, a stentorian voice was heard—"I say, you fellows, shut up! I want to sleep." It was Myers who had heard the whole proceeding. Early next morning I went to him and said he had heard the worst of my criticisms, and that all I could do was to tell him on what I founded them, which I did, entering into a very severe analysis. He was angelical and we were good friends. But I felt foolish. I have never so put my foot in it.

What do you think of Palgrave's lines on Clough? I suppose he is backed up by Froude and Matthew Arnold. I look forward to your Clough article. Clough is the crux of criticism. I am glad you have felt the pinch of him—the absolute impossibility of saying even what you think about him. It explains why all the notices he has had are so unsatisfactory; it also justifies the less articulate in their misappreciation of him, for

where we cannot formulate we are apt to think there is nothing worth formulating.

21.—To H. S. *Clifton, Sept.* 10.

I am glad to hear from you, but sorry that you write in bad spirits. Has anything happened? If by my experiment being a success you mean the Swiss journey, *soit.*

I, like everybody, am puzzling about this Byron business. My father says he knew the story years ago. But fancy Grove saying "it is particularly gratifying to the Editor."—I should think it was: he will sell several editions of his stupid Magazine. Fancy that Yankee novelist letting the cat out of the bag with such unctuous gusto and sentimental wailings. If Lord and Lady Byron are conscious, the latter must be as ashamed as the former is cynically amused at the triple championship of virtue set up by McM., Grove and Stowe.

I wish Dr. Lushington had had the telling to the world of the truth.

But whether it might not well have been left untold I doubt. Posterity would not have been able to say what it will now say, "of the two leading English poets of the XIXth Century one practised, the other eulogized incest." —Heaven is kind to the Homers, Aristophanes and Shaksperes who are beyond the reach of sensational Ghouls and Magazine resurrectionists. Ought not Grove to have completed his stupid address by heading the whole thing with an apt quotation?—

"It is right the many-headed beast should know."

I am very sorry to hear of Payne's death; though I did not know him, I knew him through you and felt I should know him—had always, too, the expectation of his

emerging into eminence. It is very very sad. Nothing is more sad than the early death of the inheritors of renown so wholly unfulfilled and yet so promising.

Write to me again soon and in better spirits. Your letter is rather stern and greyly coloured: mine I fear was flippant.

22.—To H. S. *Clifton, Oct.* 12.

Why I have not written is simply, I think, because my nervous energy is diminished and a letter costs me a good deal. I have besides the S.S.A. been taken up with a course of lectures I have written on Greek Literature from Hesiod to Pindar which has interested me. It is for the College during this Term. The pressure was great, for I knew that when the ladies' course began I should have to spend my time chiefly in the work of the two sets, getting up lectures, giving them and reading papers. I began on Saturday with about 80 ladies. They seemed to me pleasant to deal with, more attentive and repaying than boys. Also I had a highly intelligent audience—ladies like the two Miss Winkworths being the high-water mark and a few schoolgirls the low. It is not easy to strike a balance between the two extremes.

The S.S.A.,* as far as its talk went, was extremely twaddling and boring. I should have blushed to inflict on an educated audience all the papers I heard: some of the Presidential addresses were mildly interesting. But I approve of the whole thing, since it does certainly stir people up, rub them together, and set them going by a direct appeal to their weakness—the love of notables most particularly. Kingsleiolatreia was rampant. He seemed to me, spite of ranting and raging and foaming

* Social Science Association.

and swelling himself to twice his natural dimensions, or perhaps because of all this, to be the right man in the right place. He made an impression on masses.

Mrs. Blackwell, the American Dr., was the most interesting person I saw.

Myers stayed two nights with us. He is very nice but still to me somewhat incomprehensible. How far he is frank, how far he is shading himself down from courtesy, I cannot quite make out. He liked Catherine I could see.

If you are not reading poetry I will send you the last two pieces I wrote. One is sufficiently personal; the other is an intimation of the style (partly of the substance) of a Sophist quoted in Philostratus.

Percival told me he should not stand for Rugby—health and other considerations alleged. But do not mention it; for it might be offered him and then I do not think he would refuse it. I do not think he is the man: but then who is?

Mrs. Clough is very ill indeed, at Tenby, of typhoid fever. Mrs. Lushington is there and their friend Dr. Thompson from London as well as Miss Clough and a London nurse. I sent her a water-bed on Saturday and to-day heard that she is a little better but in a very critical state. She has, they say, great rallying powers and vigour to draw upon. The *Westminster* with your article has not yet come to me. I am expecting it. I only saw last Thursday that it had appeared.

Have you seen a new paper called *The Academy?* It is very Simcoxian in its start: but I should think it might become a useful organ for writers if not for readers.

I have learned lately much about the sentimentalities of boys. The rising generation is different from its ancestors; *peior avis* shall I say? At any rate, if not

peior avis, θηλύνεται κέαρ. I do not know where we shall all end with our overwrought nerves and irreligiousness and sentiment.

23.—To H. S. *7, Victoria Square, Oct.* 17.

You must have been intentionally deceiving me when you said that your Clough article was unsatisfactory, etc. It is really the best thing I have ever seen of yours and a celestial luminary among Reviews. To have combined so much acute and delicate criticism of the poems with so many brief but potent general remarks, to have been epigrammatical and serious, deeply sympathetic and lightly sarcastic, by turns, is a great triumph. Myers writes to ask me who wrote the paper and I do not wonder that he says: "it seemed like a more serious Bagehot—like a more sharply defined Henry Sidgwick." You have, I think, said the *dernier mot* about Clough on a great many points. Here is an instance: "his mind seems habitually to have been swayed by large, slow, deep-sea currents, the surface remaining placid, even tame." A good deal of the article of course I had foreknown—your particular view of the value of Clough's irony and of his amatory scepticism, *e.g.* I do not agree with you about the characters in "Amours de Voyage" which, for me, are far from having great personal distinctness. Myers asks whether "ascended" in the quotation from the "Shadow" is a misprint. It is not. I printed it so from the MS. of course. "Ascendedst" would have been better. It is like Shelley's "Thou lovest but ne'er knew." I believe a few generations will see the end of the 2nd person singular termination of the verb, in the past tenses at least.

I wonder how you write an article like that. It is all *décousu*, and yet the better for being so. There seems no particular structure, and yet nothing fits in badly.

24.—To H. S. *Clifton, Oct.* 23.

Poor Conington died yesterday. On the 21st a boil on the lip, from which he seemed to be recovering, determined itself as a malignant pustule. Paget came from London to Boston, where he was, and pronounced the case hopeless—blood poisoning had set in and both lungs were giving way. He, that day, dictated a very characteristic letter to Courthope and yesterday he died. This is the whole brief history, I believe, of what seems to me one of the most cruel and sudden blows of fate.

I think of it so much that I am impelled to write to you, but I have nothing to say.

25.—To H. S. *Clifton, Jan.* 29.
(Too late at night for writing.)

Since your visit nothing very remarkable has happened except a visit from Jowett and one from Norman—both memorable. Were there a school of sculptors in bronze, he (Norman) might make a fortune as a model; or were I a painter, I might even in that inferior art of colour give the world a new, true, original transcript from Hellenic life.

Should you come across it look at "A Dream Book" by E. V. B. The drawings are a phenomenon of the first importance in our art.

Jowett had much to say, chiefly about my work on Elizabethan literature which he wishes me to undertake in a severely historical spirit—also about more grave matters, especially the future of religious feeling and opinion in England. He complains bitterly of the "flabbiness" of our present religious consciousness and rejects my facile belief that the civilized world must, in its present highly intellectualized scientific condition, advance

after a needful period of putrid softening, towards a new synthesis. His firm conviction of the possibility of continuing for centuries in a slough of lightly worn and morally obstructive dogmas, prejudices, permanent attitudes of traditional acceptance, startled and appalled me. I have grown to believe myself in the centre of a transformation scene, and to expect that ere long (I do not much care if I reckon by decades or by centuries) the scenery and figures will be fixed for a new action.

I have finished my lecture writing: it was a long task, and I did it badly. I took some pleasure in translating some of the ῥήσεις of Hippolytus, Medea, Hecuba, Phœnissæ, into Elizabethan blank-verse, however. You ask me for an epigram on Euripides. I cannot make one—except this; that he seems to me a sort of divine Beaumont and Fletcher, what they would have been in a more genial atmosphere. He, like them, adorns his strangest, most unnatural, situations (that *e.g.* of Admetus) with exquisite poetry which would be appropriate if the major premises were not wrong. I feel in reading him, what I feel in reading them, that each play was a grape from a ripe cluster—if one seemed less good than another I knew the next might restore my delight in the flavour and sweetness of the whole.

I am very languid,—brain as usual, at one-quarter working power. But I rub on. It provokes me to think of your enormous fertility of ideas and power of elaborating thought. I say it provokes me—not, thank goodness, makes me envious. It is provoking to remain a potentiality when your physique is your tool, and your physique is, as it is, yourself. Is it the sign of a bad workman to quarrel with your physique? I think it is a sign that you are not a master: the masters in spite of bad tools, produce imperishable results: but the prentices may by labour become masters. I am getting dazed—half asleep. Good night.

26.—To H. S. *Clifton, Sept.* 12.

The Temptation of Adam, in the Gallery.
The Martyrdom of St. Agnes, in the Gallery.
Bacchus and Ariadne, in the Ducal Palace.
Christ before Pilate, in San Rocco.
The Temptation of Adam, in d°.
The Temptation of Christ, in d°.

These pictures of Tintoretto, my dear Henry, since you ask me, I should greatly like to see here—not to mention several portraits of Doges and Senators, a Triumph of Venice receiving the spoils of the Adriatic, and three panel pictures, companions to the Bacchus, perhaps also Moses striking the rock and the Annunciation in San Rocco. I did not say you were wrong; I only asked you to consider whether you were right in saying that inferior people such as, I suppose, Palma il Giovane, Contarini, or even Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga —could do as well in decoration. Meanwhile I am not prepared to *prove* they could not. I only know when I interrogate my memory that Tintoret has impressed me with the sense of a forcible, fiery, originally-seeing genius, while the works of these other men have made for me many walls vaguely beautiful with forms and colours.

I do not wonder at this war colouring your thoughts. It is the never-ceasing undercurrent of life just now. The fact that these Germans are educated touches me but little. Indeed the paradox of educated food for powder, as far as it goes, seems to give some outlook into a possible *reductio ad absurdum* of warfare. It is the mere brute mass of human misery in the battlefield, in the villages, the starvation and conflagration of Metz and Strasburg and the *Wahnsinn* of Paris, that together give me a curious sense of instability. I do not know what to make of the human nature that acts and suffers

thus—with patience and passion, reason and all the rest of it, at play together.

All I hope for the moment is that the first shot at Paris will burst the swollen windbag of the French heroism and bring on the end. But what end after all? This raving is humbug. Where are you? You do not date your letter.

27.—To H. S. [Undated.]

I have been ill a good deal lately and am only just able to work at my Italian Literature, a little every day, with no strength left over. What have you wanted to write? If you have brewed aught, pray pour off. You will find my black box and all my poems gone, evanished quite, not merely keyless but buried. I want to be the historian of Italian Literature and so I trundled away my stumbling-blocks. What has become of them only C. and I know. *Illud cacoethes poetandi* is almost extinct in me.

ÆT. 30.] 28.—To H. S. *Clifton, Feb.* 1.

I have been home here ten days, writing hard at my first chapter, which is meant to contain a sweeping review of the ethnology, political history, domestic habits, commerce, religious movements, arts, learning and language of Italy before the age of Dante.

I have rough hewn all this, made as it were an outline for future stippling and filling in. To get so much accumulated matter out of my head is both a relief and an exhaustion—analogous to parturition.

My Dante Lectures began on Saturday. I am going to give the same course at Exeter next month: the Palace offers me hospitality.

My father is still very ill. He gets no strength and yet his state goes lingering on without permanent worsening. The protraction of anxiety is most trying. It is now 2 years he has been ill, and 7 months since we began to feel that his life might any day cease.

29.—To H. S. [*Clifton*], *March* 3.

Thank you. It is good to get the kind sympathy of men like you at such a time. After the long weariness of my dear father's illness I hardly expected to feel the blow of his loss so crushing. It has come and it cannot be surpassed in heaviness. I have not only lost a father but the best friend—in him the most spontaneous and unselfish love for me was combined with sympathy for my tastes and occupations, pride in my success if I ever had any, interest in every undertaking, jealous care of every interest. It is possible that the loss of a wife might bring more sorrow. I cannot think of any other loss which could bring so much sense of isolation, of having suddenly been deprived of what hitherto was vital.

30.—To H. S. *Clifton*, *May* 31.

I do not know how to sit down to write gossip with the world in ruins. This last fortnight is surely the worst woe of modern times—the most dispiriting for the prospects of mankind. We tell each other this, and there it seems to end.

If all goes well, I hope to get to the Alps about the middle of July — Antwerp, Basle, Rigi Scheideck, Eggischam Zermatt, Théodule, M. Rosa Valleys, Monte Moro, Mürren, home, being my present programme. I doubt if C. will go with me.

I saw Noel in London. *Il s'obstine de se croire poète.* And I believe he will be one by sheer *entêtement.* I think some MS. poems I saw of his very fine—with fewer prosaic flaws than usual and with a smoother style.

I send a poem of mine which escaped burial * in November by accident. Please return that I may burn it. I think in style it is the strongest I have written.

What a fine play Æschylus would have written on the Crime, the Hubris, and the Ate of France. Nemesis is a great moral fact.

31.—To H. S. *Clifton, Sept.* 24.

I seem to have a great deal to tell you—long pent-up, to which your letter to-day received opens a sluice in my mind.

We came back this day 3 weeks ago. Of 7 weeks spent in Switzerland 2 were consumed by me in having what was either the measles or some form of low fever, I don't correctly know which. The remaining 5 were very enjoyably spent at Chamonix and in the Oberland in the company of Graham. Catherine is very well. She enjoyed herself among the Alps much. We all three went to the Jardin and the Grands Mulets together and laid up a store of other pleasant memories.

However, Switzerland does not seem to have done as much for me as usual. We came home straight from Bern into the midst of dreariness—settlings of furniture, old associations, new servants, and the loss of our two domestic treasures James and Sarah. (Matrimony!)

It was very jolly being with Graham in Switzerland. He became better and stronger in soul and body than I have ever known him. I, too, shook off there for the time my physical disabilities—could walk, endure cold

* See Letter 27.

and heat, sleep, eat, etc., like an ordinary healthy man. I also wrote—Poems in Terza Rima, notably one called "Love and Death," another called "With Caligula in Rome," a third "The Eiger and the Monk," together with less aspiring works. I used to write them in my head when walking over the glaciers or along the slopes and valleys of Mürren and the Scheinige Platte (a very fine place for poet or painter or for nature worshipper). I will send you these in print.

As for Noel and his controversy with you—some echoes of it I have heard. My opinion about his actual achievement is not greatly altered, except that I think he has improved in style and not lost in energy. But my admiration for him as a being has vastly increased. I am sure I have said nothing to justify him in supposing that I think him superior to Swinburne, or myself on a level with Morris. On the contrary I vexed him much last June by telling him that I thought both he and I had no chance in the long run against poets our superiors in delicacy of expression and energy of imagination. Afterwards, alone among the hills, my Prophecy of Love of Comrades as a future institution of Democracy came upon me; and I began to believe more in my own poetic vocation. I wrote to tell him so. I said: "I agree with you that it is no good being a Minor Poet. This and nothing else—disdain of the 3rd place—was the root of my railing in Hyde Park Square. But now I feel capacity for attaining the vast second sphere of Paradise—if not among Seraphim and Cherubim, at least for sitting among Princedoms, Dominations, Thrones. With adequate art, with something of a prophecy, may I not claim so much?" As for himself, I said "Go in and win!"

But I stand utterly aloof from all discussions of who is first and who is last and who is above whom. To

believe in one's Poesy or Prophecy, to believe in oneself is the great point. Then to sing and preach. The rest the world must do and the man must leave unnoticed.

As for criticism, I, without wishing to impose its task on you, do regard you as the almost absolute *lumen siccum* and do feel most grateful to you for all you ever say. When you praise, I feel it is such praise as the strong will give; when you blame, I know I am inadequate. But I am aware that more inflammable multitudes are likely to praise more and blame less—as also I am sure that less intelligent spirits would, if they read me, rail more and appreciate less. I take you in fact as a scientific thermometer. For my own part I regard Swinburne as unapproachable in his sphere, the sphere of lyrical light and heat, now dignified by a great humane enthusiasm. For Buchanan I have little regard. Morris I admire; but I look on his work as ephemeral.

I read your "Verification of Belief" at Mürren and was much impressed with its force, compression, and overwhelming destructive accuracy of analysis. It is the most wholly sceptical thing I have ever read. If you write a whole book in that way, it will be about as hard as Aristotle. Oh for the precision of your well-thewed and well-trained mind! It makes your hard tough meat worth chewing.

Don't get ill. Your letter sounds to me rather tired and *ennuyé*. I wish you could come here soon.

What strikes me in your "Essay on Verification" is its hard-headedness, perfect control over material and your own mind, concision, comparing faculty. I think you ought to produce a great book on your subject; though as for the value of it or of what any one does which is not either quite beautiful, or new in science, or eminently useful,—there I doubt. I am more than ever sceptical about the value of human endeavour.

32.—To H. S. *Clifton, March 2.*

. . . Did I tell you I had had a very kind letter from Walt Whitman to whom I sent a copy of my poem "Love and Death"—that only. He says he thinks it "of the loftiest, strongest and tenderest," and wants to know more of me. Consequently I have begun a correspondence. He sent me the other day a new poem he has composed and is going to send me the next edition of his works—how many editions does he intend to have, and each a little altered from the rest?

33.—To J. E. Pearson. *Clifton, July 24.*

I was very glad to hear from you and to know that you appreciated Marcus Aurelius. I spoke about him to you that evening in Clifton because I thought that he more exactly than any else had expressed that scientific acquiescence in the order of Nature which you proposed as the only rational religion. In truth, the more we learn about Nature the more we shall come to accept the faith of Marcus Aurelius, because we shall discover scientifically what he discovered philosophically, that Man is only a part of the Universe and must live by the laws of the Universe if he is to be good and happy. But we are still a long way off discovering what place Man has in Nature—what in particular the relation of Thought is to Matter—and consequently of solving the great question of the Soul—God in all Ages has been the abbreviated formula of the results supposed to be gained concerning the human mind and its relation to the world. . . . It is really curious to notice how exactly each age and each race creates God in its own image. In this century, when our interest in personality has given place to a supreme interest in laws, and when

imagination has been succeeded by science, God very naturally passes either into a Pantheistic Being—a source of all-pervasive life conterminous with the material Universe—or gets forgotten among the crowds of facts requiring to be formulated, in which he has no obvious place. We are in fact now too interested in phenomena to care for theology, too bent on actual discovery to embark on speculation. Yet this is one-sided. Just as the Jews were one-sided when they refused to examine the World and referred everything to the Will of Jahve; so are we, when we are contented with the examination of matter and neglect the problems of the Mind. For after all, the Mind is a reality—perhaps *the only* reality—and what do we *know* about the possible eternity of Thought either in the Universal (called God) or in the particular (called Man)? It is because I believe that the interest in the problem of Mind must always recur, and that at the same time man will never gain more than an approximate solution of this problem, that I am fully convinced that faiths and creeds and religions must continually crop up.

What you say—which is Comtism—that we ought to repress all speculation about God, all hope and fear about another life, and so on—is quite true as regards each individual in this century, who is far more likely to aid the world to a new synthesis by exploring phenomena than by meddling with out-worn conjectures. But that the Human Race at large, with its faculty for thinking and preserving Thought, should eventually cease to care about the investigation into the nature of Thought, which involves some consideration of its permanency in the Universe (question of God) and permanency in the individual (question of immortality), I entirely refuse to believe. *Naturam expellas furca*, etc. The scientific pitchfork has for the moment expelled that eager ques-

tioning, but in the long run it will recur and make use of all the facts collected by science for its own work of forming an abbreviated notation. That process of abbreviation, abstraction, synthesis, is what we call Metaphysic in its purest form, Theology in its more imaginative and emotional form.

Even Marcus Aurelius, even Comte, even Walt Whitman (who attempts a scientific synthesis), each has a metaphysic—an abstract conception of Nature, of Humanity, or of God, on which his morality hinges—a set of obstinate beliefs, as in M. A. that nature is a ζῶον, in Comte that Humanity is indefinitely perfectible, in W. W. that God includes all in a broad sanity and joyousness, which he *cannot* demonstrate but with which he cannot dispense.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile, as I have often said to you, we in our studies dream and reason. The People lives and acts and feels. It is possible that the new synthesis, if one there is to be, may rise from the proletariate, as Christianity, as Buddhism, as the Mosaic Theocracy before it. "Thou art the same, and Thy years do not change." "Und alle Deine hohen Werke sind herrlich wie am ersten Tag." Do you know Goethe's Proemium to "Gott und Welt"? "In namen dessen"? That is a good provisional synthesis, a working hypothesis, for us men of an interstellar period of obscurity. Well, I have delivered my views on the relation of theology and morality to the scientific attitude of this century. . . .

One word about Christianity. I think it more than probable that the Christian morality (rightly conceived, not confused with dogmas . . .) is the truly human, purely scientific—is the norm from which all other moralities more or less deflect.

34.—To H. S. *Clifton, Oct.* 23.

I went recently to Oxford and saw many people. There was a notable dinner party at Jowett's when I talked to Swinburne the whole evening. He is more amiable than I expected—very modest, yet childishly pleased with his pet works and thoughts; very enthusiastic and not in any way *blasé;* clearly of a strong brain physically, and at any rate of a memory as yet unimpaired. That "Songs before Sunrise" are being translated into Italian for the propagation of Mazzinism, that he purposes to translate our old ballads into French for Victor Hugo, that he is learning Æschylus by heart, are a few of the many things he said. I shall prosecute my acquaintance in London, where I hope to deliver a Sunday Lecture next month.

Ah! it is true that I am going to review "The Red Flag."* Do you not pity me? I rather pity myself—except that it will not be such an event to me as to the author. I wish, like Shelley, Roden would leave himself to the verdict of posterity instead of trying to wring praises and more praises from the very adequately appreciative present (myself *e.g*). However, it is a source of strength to him. I wish I could a little more enjoy my own doings. I am pleased with what you say about my Greek essays. I think of trying to get Smith and Elder to publish eight of them. By the way Pater comes out soon with a volume of Essays on Æsthetics, or some such matter—which I am to review. I expect the book will be good. I still stick to the Renaissance in Italy. I am at present translating specimens of Poliziano's Italian poetry which seems to me most exquisite—of a wonderful quality,

* By Roden Noel.

blending the antique and romantic; pure outline with sensual fullness.

I read "Gareth" to-night—once through quickly. Quite one of the best Idylls, I say, though spoiled from the old story—as I always feel about these Idylls. It is such a comical medley—the impression on the memory of that old tale of Sir Beaumains, with its Knights of the Red and Black Launds—and this exquisite embroidery and jewellery of modern phrase—and then again, the antique grotesquery of the abuse the lady deals in. I know not whether to love or loathe. The workmanship is magnificent—a little too indirect, as in the simile from the anemone. Some of the new-coined phrases—as "ever highering"—are good.

There now: Catherine has just come in, like Lady Macbeth, or Lady Southdown, to warn me off to bed. To bed! to bed! *La man che ubbidisce all' intelletto* is not so weary to-night as usual, and I would willingly go on prosing to you a half-hour longer. Good night. We are all well. Baby is most beloved and loveable.

35.—To H. S. *Clifton, Dec.* 1.

I will by this post send you a copy of my book on Dante, in order to get the priceless precious gift you promise—which I shall obtain at a wonderous cheap price if the *Athenæum* is right about my poor little volume. I have always wanted to know what were the sensations of an author who seasoned his breakfast with the perusal of a well-peppered, malignant review of his first book. I have this morning experienced the emotions peculiar to this condition—but I fear not with sufficient unself-consciousness for exactly learning what I wished to learn. I kept saying to myself: "that's a hard hit—that's spiteful—I wonder whether it is making me

twitch and shrink the right way." But I expect that I had a pretty fair experience on the whole.

I wonder what you think of "The Red Flag." You will see what I think in the *Academy*. If Poetry not of the first order is Poetry, then I think Noel's poetry now has grown to be very good, and I have said so.

It is so disheartening to have bad health and a bad memory, and not in one's literary work to be able to attain by any labour to *Gründlichkeit* and *Genauigkeit*. I do not like uttering to you these little bat-squeaks of a Troglodytic creature. And I *am* often so happy on my horse scampering at full gallop over the downs—so very happy when I am translating Poliziano into English Verse—and very tranquil when I am hugging my Baby.

36.—To H. F. B. [*Clifton*], *March* 3.

If you care to do so, correct two misprints on page 78 of Pater. Those sonnets are quoted from my translations of Michael Angelo. In the first sonnet, line 7 *our* should be *one*, and in the second sonnet line 7 *those* should be *these*. It would also be well to print *knight* in the last line of the second sonnet with a large K, since Michael Angelo designed a pun upon the young man's name.

I wonder whether you could tell me if you retain any impression, (and if so, of what sort) or none, of the two poems I read you the other evening of mine? You will think me a most persistently troublesome egoist. But I am trying to estimate myself, and the sincere simple judgment of some one like you is wonderfully helpful to me. Can I write so as to give pleasure? so as to increase the mental life of anybody? so as to help to satisfy their craving for fulfilment? That is the question I ask myself now; and I am prepared to receive from

you a negative answer with all humility. I would sooner cease striving than strive with no result.

37.—To H. F. B. [*On board ship*], *April* 13.

We are tossing about on the very spot under Mount Eryx in the bay of Drepanum where Æneas instituted the games for Anchises. I can see through surf and rain the rock on which he set his ilex-tree as a goal for the galleys. But, in spite of such classical associations, it is no small inconvenience to be cooped up inside a little steamer, unable to advance an inch on sea until the wind stops (and this wind, called il Maestro or the Master, often blows four days at a stretch), and equally prevented by the brigands who infest the coast from landing and pursuing our journey to Girgenti by land. The ruins of Segesta, where stands a splendid Doric temple, and where was built the Herôon of Philippus, are only twelve miles distant. Yet to get out of the port and to drive to Segesta would be culpable of imprudence in the face of these brigands. Had I known how bad it is, I should not have come here. It is impossible to do anything on land with security in this end of Sicily ; and on the sea one has to suffer the ennui of days spent in a stifling, pitching ship. Half of Plutarch in Italian and half of " Tom Jones " in English are all the books we have got with us ; and even these it is not easy to read, in the tossing and rolling of the steamer.

I wonder what you and Dakyns decided about the heliotype of the Adorante. He has not yet written to me to say anything about my book, which must now be nearly finished printing. I wish I could get a copy of it when I am travelling. I want to see the face of my new child. And when I come home, I hope to be at work on another book : so that I shall not then perhaps feel quite

so much interest in the last. I have but little doubt, in spite of grumbling about brigands and the sea, that this journey will yield pleasant subjects for composition. Palermo is a most beautiful place and is rendered interesting by the odd jumble of its history—Saracens, Normans, Frenchmen, Germans, and Spaniards having all left some traces on a city which lies in a landscape worthy of Theocritus. The climate, however, is not yet what one expects of the South. It is indeed more harsh and variable than what we left in England :—though we can sit very often with open windows and without fires, yet the changes from heat to cold are so brusque that it is necessary to wear very thick clothing.

I hope you will be at Clifton next term. I wonder where you will be in the holidays. Perhaps it is better to send this to Clifton, if we reach Girgenti! I will, however, leave it open till we get on shore that you may see how long our durance will have lasted. We set off from Palermo at 8 a.m. yesterday (the 12th) and ought to have been now at Girgenti (4 p.m., 13th), but we are stopped less than halfway.

38.—To H. F. B. *Aosta, May* 25.

We have had such a wonderful journey since I wrote to you (from Trapani, I think, and Girgenti in the middle of the bandits), that I feel inclined before turning homewards, where I trust I shall see you soon, to tell you something about it. We did *not* fall into the hands of any Sicilian ruffians, though we drove across the island, guarded by three mounted soldiers all the way, and often attended by a strong body of infantry. There was one place where we had to cross a broken bridge in the middle of the brigands' country. We crossed by night, and a detatchment of a hundred infantry with

fixed bayonets was stationed at each end of the bridge. Of all the many places we saw in Sicily Syracuse is quite the most interesting. I had my Thucydides with me and read those great descriptions of the sea fights in the Harbour and of all the battles on Epipolæ and then of the retreat of the Athenians across the marsh of the Anapus—which we too visited. I also sat and mused in the stone quarries where the 7000 Athenian captives pined away and died. The place is very beautiful and picturesque now—solemn and mournful from the stately charm of its cypresses and olive trees—but not dismal. Yet it is haunted by the memory of that old Agony—like another Garden of Gethsemane. Etna is a wonderful mountain. We spent many days in its neighbourhood and saw it all round ; but could not reach the top owing to the fierce snowstorm which swept over us when we were about three hours from the crater. After Sicily we went to Athens. Athens itself betters all that I have dreamed of Athens. It is too beautiful to talk about, and the honey of Hymettus (which you must taste if we bring some back safely) is divine, and the nightingales in the garden of the Academy sing as sweetly as they did to Sophocles or Plato. Colonus, Eleusis, Salamis,—those are great names, and great places to have seen. Then Corinth ; and the double peak of Parnassus from the sea ; and Erymanthus ; and Hermes' home, Cyllene ; and Ithaca ; and the Phæacian isle, Corcyra ; and the cliffs of Leucadia ; and the waves of Actium. We crossed from Corfu to Brindisi and have since then been in Italy —seeing Ancona, and the black bejewelled Madonna of Loreto, and Rimini, and Bologna, and the frescoes of Correggio at Parma, and the great square of Piacenza, and Milan with a cloudless view of Lombardy and the Alps from the marble roof of the Cathedral. Now at last we are in this mountain valley, gathering lilies and

white roses and Solomon's seals beneath the huge glaciers of Mont Blanc and the arrowy summit of the Grivola. It is hard to remember that we were so lately in Greece among the olive trees and on the dark blue waves through which you see purple and green forests of seaweeds a score of fathoms down. After all the Alps are the best. I say this deliberately, and I think I have a right to pronounce an opinion. If you do not yet know Switzerland, you have a joy to come, which will last longer than anything which the arts can give. My emotions on entering a picture gallery or music room or even a gallery of statues are faint when compared with the thrill I still feel when I greet these sublimities of the great mountains.

39.—To H. S. *Clifton, June.*

We had a very good time. I look back with wonder at the amount we saw and did. In spite of the brigands, who get worse instead of better, and who are a real nuisance felt though unseen in the whole western part of the island, we saw almost as much as we desired of Sicily. Then we went to Athens, which surpasses all other places in a dignified and aerial beauty; and passed Corinth, down the gulf, through the Ionian islands, stopping at Corfu, to Brindisi. After that came a number of old towns in Italy, and lastly a week in the valleys of Cogne and Aosta beneath Mont Blanc.

I cannot say that I have "poetized" much—in fact not at all—but I have brought home a store of pleasant memories and much material for writing new landscape studies. I wanted to bring out a book of them to be called "Prose Idylls of Southern Scenery." But I am told Charles Kingsley has just advertised a vol. of Prose Idylls—curious and disagreeable coincidence. Sicily

has, I think, been overpraised. Except in the neighbourhood of Palermo and Etna it is monotonous and bare. The olives are not nearly as good as at Mentone: but Corfu beats even Mentone in this point. Corfu is the ideal of Mediterranean beauty. The people of Sicily are ugly and repulsive and brutish. Then Castro Giovanni, which the guide-book makes much fuss about, is easily matched by scores of Umbrian and Tuscan hill-towns. Perhaps it has the advantage of some scores of feet in height. But it has no real artistic beauties, no great historical associations and no view but the wide desolate corn-land of internal Sicily. Sicily is *interesting*: but Corsica beats it hollow for scenery. Syracuse is the most remarkable place in the island—its topography is so clear. Girgenti has most of architectural remains. Palermo is really beautiful.

Yes; I have "Red Cotton," etc. It is an ugly story and I do not think Browning's analysis of it adds much to what any intelligent reader of the reports of it in a newspaper could have gathered. How the *Aeademy* can find new (presumably, therefore, striking not wholly for ugliness) metrical effects in it I can't imagine. It goes jumbling on and one does not stop to think whether it is prose or verse, one knows it is Browning.

Brown * is somewhat disappointed, I fancy, at "Betsy Lee"'s not making more mark. *Littérateurs* ought to expect nothing and hope for less. He goes on, however, pouring out "Yarns."

Who is going to write Mill's Life? It ought to be a very remarkable book, the history of English thought for a quarter of a century.

* T. E. Brown.

40.—To H. F. B. [*Clifton*], *June* 27.

I think I understood what you meant about that poem yesterday, and I quite appreciated the criticism of it as true. In the quintessence of passionate emotion, conceived by a poet as a kind of fervid dream, and analysed by him with an intense and tremulous sympathy, there is always unreality. At least we cannot fail to feel that the actual facts of life never correspond to his vision, and that he has concentrated in a few moments the experience which is diffused, with all its subtle flux and reflux, over many months or years. Yet even so, even in the new wine of poetic description, there is really a deep truth, for I know that no poems can exceed for intensity and glow certain actualities of life.

The kind of recoil from excessive brilliance in works of art to the greyness of common life is what is always happening—when we read "Romeo and Juliet," or even "Œdipus at Colonus," or the story of Gudrun. I even feel it after listening to passionate music.

When does Oakeley * go in for these great feasts of fugues? I wish you would tell me that I might come and partake of one of them.

41.—To H. S. *Clifton, Sept.* 13.

I am writing to you in bed. Yesterday I was galloping my horse near the sea wall when I fainted and fell back on my head on the road. I stayed insensible about an hour, during which two of my old College pupils and dear friends, who happened to be walking near, conveyed me to a house and got a doctor. I have no bones broken, but a shattered brain, I fear. There is indeed little doubt that this accident was the

* E. M. Oakeley, then Master at Clifton College.

result of overwork. I do not think it was more than a common fainting fit, however.

42.—To H. S. *Clifton, Oct.* 21.

There is more consolation in your sympathy than in the reflection that you would like to be going to do what I have to do against my will.

> "Was man nicht hat das eben braucht man,
> Und was man hat kann man nicht brauchen."

This is as true of having as of knowing. I cannot reconcile myself to my destiny. I will, however, tell you what, as far as I can see forward, I think of doing. I leave in a P. and O. steamer for Malta on the 30th. Thence I may go across to Tunis and see the ruins of Carthage, return by Palermo to Naples, and then work up through Italy to Cannes. My sister, Lady Strachey, has a villa now at Cannes, and there I may perhaps stay with her for a while before I come home. I am going to take Homer with me for a *pièce de résistance.* My book of studies of Greek Poets has so far succeeded that I think it may be worth while to bring out a second series, embracing Homer, Hesiod, Æschylus, Sophocles and the minor comic fragments. If I live to do this, at some future time the two series might be combined into a complete survey of Greek Poetry.

I think "Alcestis"* very good. It is a curious product of the Dresden-Young-England *Schwärmerei,* and is chockful of reminiscences, but all very gracefully blended.

Roden writes in the same exultant style to me. I am, of course, glad to have my printed judgment of his merits stamped with the still more fervid appreciation of the Laureate. But I fear that, as friendship biassed me to say my utmost, so something may have induced

* By Mrs. Warre-Cornish.

Tennyson a little to exaggerate, in favour of Lady Gainsborough's son, that sympathy for young poets which, if you remember, he expressed very genially to us at Farringford.

A poem of mine about leaving England for Italy, written ages since, is going to be published in the *Cornhill*. It sounds like a poem to myself. But between wishing a friend God-speed, in highly coloured pictures, and looking forward oneself to lonely evenings and chilly seas, there is a great difference.

43.—To H. S. *Cortona, Dec.* 15.

I fear I shall not see you at Cannes. I should have liked to linger in Umbria and Tuscany until you reached the Riviera, and then to have joined you, for my life in this middle region of Italy is most delightful. My long study of the country gives me a firm hold on everything: I see nothing that does not fortify or correct some opinion or help to give colour to some description. And I can work so well! I read chronicles and histories and biographies on the very spot where the events happened, and make notes for future use which have the juice of life in them. I have benefited by the journey, and here at least I am not bored. But before I touched the shore of Italy—*i.e.* in Malta, and at Tunis, and in Sicily, and on innumerable steamers—I was a little bored, and thought the whole thing a sell. But I must break this fair life short. Oh, Italy! How much more we owe to you than to Germany! This is what I want to make the world see; but I fear it is rather like preaching the excellent qualities of their grandmother to them. The only thing that annoys me here is the *défaut de mes qualités*. I am a poet, and poets have special sufferings. My sympathy with the magnificent young people I see

about, makes me understand them in a kind of odd intuitive way and desire their company. But I cannot touch them or get close to them. I am like a statue walking among men. As a form of art their life is mine. It is I who know all about their historical antecedents. It is I who have set their songs to English cadences. But if I tried to reach them they would find me as unintelligible as a man to whom we should give the Venus of the Louvre for bride. This is the great grief of a poet of my sort: he lives with a continual ὄρεξις for the distant and the past; his agony of longing is a condition of his sensibility. See on this subject Browning's "Cleon." And all this goes deeper still. You are right in saying that nature has given me great facility in acquisition and production. But with this there is a curse—the corresponding quickness and keenness of emotion that perforce must loose itself in longing. What I suffer from desires that grow in strength with my growth, I only know. And when they become blunt, I shall know, not that I am freed, but that I am dying: for these intense pains are a condition of vitality in me. It is all this which makes me alternate between feverish voracious work and exhausted idleness. I have intervals of clairvoyance and intervals of stagnant blindness.

These personalities would be out of place addressed to any one but you: but you are a student of human nature and I am a specimen.

I hope to be one of the readers of your book—for this reason; my meditations of late, carried on mostly between sea and skies after reading bits of Helmholtz' lectures, which I have with me, make me believe that on the method of Ethics will depend the future of the human race. One such discovery as Newton's law of gravitation in the field of morals would advance us æons forward in all that concerns spiritual life. We beat

about the bush so long because we have not found the scientific starting-point of ethics. This is what I meant when I said in my Greek book that science was to be our Deliverer.

Florence, Dec. 17.

I wrote this at Cortona on a high terrace overlooking Lake Thrasymene and the Tuscan champaign as far as Radicofani and Chiusi. I am expecting to be at Cannes, if all goes well, about the 23rd, and I shall leave it again on the 26th. The πόθος of home takes hold of me. Yet life here is wonderfully full.

44.—To H. F. B. *Clifton, Jan.* 10.

. . . I had a good time abroad: Malta, Tunis, Syracuse, Catania, Palermo, Rome, the hill-cities of Umbria, Florence, the Cornice: that was my programme. A really grand storm in the Bay of Biscay gave me a new sensation. Tunis filled my mind with wonderful Oriental pictures; but the Statue-galleries of the Vatican and the landscape of Umbria were the real pleasures of the tour. Only three or four dull days in nine weeks! Such sunlight! . . .

My book is now in the printer's hands. I am going to call it "Sketches in Italy and Greece": not a very good title. The fruit of this last journey is two new papers—one on Etna, one on Perugia.

I do not think £80 a high price for Toschi, if it includes the Camera di San Paolo and the Madonna della Scala. I congratulate you on St. Thomas, which I hope to see soon.

It was a bore for you missing your *testamur*, as you will be kept to sums and problems for some months more. But beyond this it does not matter. I know I

cried for vexation when I was plucked for Smalls; but *then* it meant wasting more than a year about that miserable pass. You do it more quickly with your new regulations. . . .

I am working now at the Renaissance book. I did much for it abroad, and bought about 100 volumes of histories at Florence. Mrs. Symonds, who thinks we have too many books, is in despair. She had hoped Muratori would stop my appetite for some time. But what is one to do, at this distance from the Br. Mus., when often a single paragraph requires references to six or seven chronicles?

I suppose Percival will be elected at Rugby. Dakyns and I are collecting his testimonials for him. . . . We ought to get a very good man here: the income is first rate and the school stands high.

45.—To H. S. *Clifton, Jan.* 31.

I am, on the whole, sorry to hear what you say about Green's * book. It agrees with his own instinct, I think. He regrets having spent so much time on destructive criticism and preparatory matter: which means, I conceive, regret for not having made his critique the "prolegomena" to some constructive utterance. Do you think he has anything constructive that would hold water to say? I am grieved that the style to an expert like you is so difficult. That is surely wrong; unless a man labours under the burden of a new prophecy (the only adequate excuse in this state of language for what we call "difficulty") he ought to be explicit to men who are familiar with the subject and use the technical phraseology.

Catherine and I are going to Oxford on Tuesday,

* Prof. T. H. Green.

and the following Monday to London (3 Victoria Street, S.W.). Is there a chance of seeing you? We are to meet numerous eminent people in London. Miss North has made a mark among "great and fashionable souls," and we are near the rose. By the way, Miss Thackeray has been reading my book about Greek Poets and professes to be in an attitude of delight. I dare say this is only her kindness, a form of sympathy with my sister-in-law not at all incompatible with sympathy with my detractors. But as she is on the crest of the wave I am pleased.

I am printing my new book, which is to be called "Sketches in Italy and Greece." The first fifty pages I have seen in type do not satisfy me. I hardly think it will improve my reputation. About a year's study of history has changed my literary taste. I want to be more full of matter and less picturesque than I used to be. In fact I am becoming a fogey.

46.—To H. F. B. *Clifton, April 7.*

. . . I hope you will not torment yourself too much about these social questions. How utterly ridiculous it would be to fling away the advantages and duties of a position to which you have been born and an education you have received, for the will-o'-the-wisp of what you know not! It is but little any of us can comprehend of so-called social questions. Yet we *must* know more about those which affect our section of the nation than about those which concern the proletariate. In the vast mass of human ignorance aspiring to knowledge and sticking fast in sciolism, perhaps the most pitiable is communistic sociology.

47.—To H. F. B. *Clifton, April* 9.

. . . We ought really to think much more of our work and of what comes next to our hands to do day after day than of our affections and the proportions in which they are distributed.

It is the worst part of a life devoted to αἴσθησις, that one cannot help thinking too much about one's feelings, and consequently one gets at moments thrown off the proper balance into either a vague longing or a querulous regret or something of the sort. I believe, however, that the earnest and vigorous man will always be able to right himself again. He ought, therefore, not to shirk the life of culture, if he is really fitted for it, *because* it exposes him to sensibilities and weaknesses. He ought to remember rather that the life of practice carries with it its own inducements to ambition, hardness, insensibility: in fact that it is pretty nearly equally difficult in all lines of life, except the life of Divine enthusiasm, to be wholly ἐγκρατής, σώφρων—the τετράγωνος ἄνευ ψόγου. The bracing work of systematic study pursued with some definite end either of academical success or of self-culture ought to be sufficient to secure your equilibrium for the present.

48.—To H. S. *Clifton, April* 30.

I did hope that I might get to Cambridge; but the days have gone by, and I have never been well enough to venture on a visit to the Eastern Counties. In fact I have been ailing in health ever since the day I saw you in London; and (till I can get to Switzerland) home is really the best place for me. I hope you got my last immortal work. I told Smith to send you a copy; and in this envelope, if I can find one, I will send

you a sonnet which I wrote as a dedication of the book to Catherine. Miss Thackeray, writing from Freshwater, says she has shown it to Tennyson who approves—long suffering old bard.

I am going to lecture again this term to the Clifton College boys. How it will agree with my lungs I do not quite know. The emotional interest which, five years ago, made me very keen to take this sort of work, has subsided. But I have enough of general sympathy for young souls left to like it.

49.—To H. S. *Barnstaple, June 29.*

I have a few more words to say about my poems. I should like to know from you whether you think "In the Syracusan Stone Quarries," "The Eiger and the Monk," "At Diocles' Tomb," and "Antinöus"* are out of the question. It is, of course, a matter of grave consideration to me whether I should publish poems at all. It is disagreeable to be forced to this conclusion, since I cannot throw off the inclination to write poetry, and a little contact with the public might help me (I sometimes fancy) to write better.

I am reading "Bothwell" whenever I feel I have any brains to read with—which is not often in many days. It is surely a wonderful work of art. I do not think anything greater has been produced in our age, in spite of its inordinate length and a strange affectation of style. However, one reads oneself into a sympathy with his use of language, and then the sustained effort of thought and imagination is overpowering in its splendour. It seems to me the most virile effort of the poetic power in combination with historic accuracy that our literature of this century can show.

* These poems were all published in "Many Moods," 1878.

50.—To H. S. *Clifton, July 8.*

I have received my poems quite safely (the loss of the page of the Baiæ poem does not signify the very least), and yesterday I sent up to Smith and Elder a collection of "Poems and Romances" including "David and Jonathan," "Love and Death," and "Calicrates." I must try, if it comes to publication, to alter the passage you object to in "Love and Death."

I owe you a great debt of gratitude for the trouble you have taken about these poems. I hope I am not doing wrong in taking this step of publication. Some of those which I have included in the collection—one in particular called "Imelda Lambertazzi"—may pass for free in the ordinary sense of the term: and another, "Palumba," which you have never seen, has pantheistic musings in it. So there may be enough in the volume to attract some malevolent remarks.

"Livingstone in Africa" * has certainly very fine passages and great general merit as a poem. But it does not carry me away or fascinate me exactly. I do not care for it, except when Noel is by to read it out and stimulate my sympathy.

51.—To H. S. *Clifton, Oct. 29.*

Catherine and I are thinking of being in London on Nov. 13 for some while. Myers has promised to take me among the spirits. I wonder whether I could go somewhere with you and him?

My poems are not exactly between heaven and earth, but are coming slowly down to the latter. I have been treating with Smith and Elder about them; and they take them on the half-profit system with no risk to me.

* By Roden Noel.

Myers, however, rather shook me again by suggesting they might injure the effect of my book on the Renaissance.

I am not just now grinding at Italian. But am refreshing my soul with draughts of Lucretius and Homer; writing a critical essay on the former considered as specifically Roman, and flirting in fancy with the vision of Helen of Troy.

I come to feel that literature, except under the pressure of æsthetic or scientific impulse, is good only to the *littérateur* as a flimsy protection against ennui.

52.—To H. F. B. *Clifton, Dec.* 14.

. . . It was very good of you to find for me and send me Ruskin's lectures. I have read them with great interest and kept them with all care. Do please get for me the rest. I wrote to Ruskin to ask him for them: but the old curmudgeon (a provisional blasphemy) has taken no notice of my humble request. I think he likes to tease a world which he finds teasing.

53.—To H. S. *Clifton, Jan.* 13.

Green is staying with us. He has been reading you. As far as I can make out his view of your book, he thinks you would have made it better, if you had given your whole attention and time to the work. He says that where you give up difficult problems, it only means that you have not stuck long enough to thinking them out. He says the book ought to have a good sale at the Universities—that he, for one, shall recommend it to all his pupils.

I mention these remarks as you asked me to do so. I have had a good many interesting talks with Green about his philosophy. He seems bent upon attacking

evolution from the Idealistic point of view, and means to give at any rate a large portion of his time in the future to constructive writing.

54.—To H. S. *Union Club*, [*London*], *Jan.* 26.

My first impression after running through the *Saturday* on you was: well here is another instance of an author who wants *all*, and who is not satisfied with language of respect and the patient homage paid to his work by an able man who does not wholly take his point of view. I would give much for such testimony to my acknowledged ability. It is in fact what I wanted and have never got.

How are you to expect your seniors (if this is Mark) to stoop lower to crown you? How can you seek that they should exactly apprehend the originality they discern and conscientiously point out? It will remain for younger minds to fill the void up by learning from you, getting you by heart, and taking, like new wax, the mould of your thought.

I have so much more passion in me than you, and am so habitually moved by passionate impulses, that I dare say I do not truly comprehend your attitude about writing and study. I cannot quite picture to myself a man who has done this, and will not, for the love of the thing, *con amore*, do more—moved by Erôs, only son of Penia and Poros.

Perhaps you are right in thinking yourself a successful impostor; and perhaps this is the first sign of your being found out. *Je n'en sais rien.*

I think it is dangerous to attach importance to the opinion of people in print or otherwise (except in matters of personal prudence, good taste and so forth). The real thing is to discover if you enjoy literary work. You will

not cumber the world with books more than you do already with your body, and oblivion covers both quickly as far as both are perishable. For a man to do what he likes best is the right course, since his liking is the surest sign of his capacity—far surer than the estimate of critics or of friends. Love is the only law. This is the one Great Gospel that is true.

55.—To H. S. *Clifton, Feb.* 4.

In spite of what you kindly say, I fear I wrote unintelligently from my club about the *Saturday* review of you. It was silly of me to confuse the literary and scientific points of view so far: yet I cannot quite comprehend how you divide them. The man of science like the poet, when it comes to expression, must, I should have thought, have been actuated to some extent by motives of self-confidence or the reverse. For myself I fear my own new book will be a fiasco, not even *d'estime*. Now that it is getting into print, I see that in trying to be accurate I have only become dull, and in aiming at comprehensiveness I have ended in diffusion.

About Ghosts: I have two engagements; one to meet Mr. Butland to-morrow; the other to meet Mr. Monch on Tuesday. If phenomena are striking, I will try to hook these media for the edification of the Cenacle.

56.—To H. S. *Siena, April* 24.

I remembered yesterday, at Volterra, that it was the day before I had been due to dine with you; and the contrast between the elegant hospitality I should have received and the savage entertainment I was enjoying in the old city of the Lucumos, 1900 feet above the Tyrrhene sea, was comic.

It is a strange sensation to be hurled out of the midst of an active English life into the solemn seclusion of these old towns. I am not quite prepared for it somehow this year, and am suffering from a tormenting inflammation of the eyes. It is dreadful to think of the two vols. of my book which remain to be finished—all the old chronicles and fusty treatises of the humanists that ought to be studied while the mechanism of my own head is out of gear. I suppose I am paying for too much reading and writing just before I left England. Catherine, however, is the better for travelling ; and, as we came to do her good, I am well content.

I find that the better part of my essays on Siena and Orvieto and Perugia are being translated into French and published in a Florentine newspaper. This is gratifying. I feel as if the landlords ought to feed me at free tables.

I want you to tell me (as I told you) what you may hear about my new book. I dare say you will not hear much. But if you do, please say it to me. It is the only work of mine which I feel incompetent to estimate ; and I therefore am curious about opinions. I suppose it is out by this time.

By the way, did you see a review by me in the *Academy* of Browning's new poem ? Please tell me if it struck you in any way. I got the proofs of the poem on Sunday morning and wrote the article on Monday night before I left England—in the middle of business and hurry. To do the thing justice seemed impossible ; and I fear, as I think back on my review, that I may have made my points brutally. Fine as the poem is, it displeased me. But it would take a long time and much of space to express the disagreement which I feel.

The spring here is as late as in England, and it is still bitterly cold and damp.

I do not expect you to read my book; for it is a waste of time for you to read what does not lie in your line and is not joyous. Perhaps, if you look at anything you will find the chapters on "The Prince," the Popes, and Savonarola most lively.

57.—To H. F. B. *Clifton, Oct.* 23.

. . . I am so glad about your Essay. It is great to get praise from the lips of taciturnity; and I know that praise rightly given, implying real success and assuring us that we have done what we strove to do, is what you say—just vital oxygen. One always knows the real praise from mere flattery, the real success from a surface show; but it does one's heart good to be assured of it . . .

Pater wrote me a very sympathetic letter about my "Renaissance" and my poem on the "Corpse of Julia." It pleased me.

58.—To H. F. B. *Clifton, Nov.* 2.

. . . I wonder whether Hollyer would send me down for inspection any of Solomon's drawings and pictures? I am interested by what you tell me, and I should be glad to help him. . . . I never really liked his style as a man, so I do not feel any duty towards him as a previous acquaintance. But it touches me to the quick to hear that a really great artist is in difficulties because no one will exhibit his pictures.

I have finished Hegel's "Aesthetik," which I read with great pleasure and some profit. It does not help one much about the problem of Art and Morality, or about the Canon of beauty—what beauty is. But it absolutely brims over with fine and acute observations. . . . I have

not yet appropriated his book or thought my own difficulties out enough to state this criticism forcibly. But, as far as I can see, a student may absorb all that Hegel says, and yet obtain no guide to his taste, no culture of his αἴσθησις—in other words he will have no compass by which to steer his course in the Pitti or the Vatican, though he can sit at home and write fine paragraphs about *das sinnliche Scheinen der Idee.*

59.—To H. F. B. *Clifton, Nov.* 15.

. . . Since I last wrote, Hollyer has sent me down the Solomons to see. I have bought Cydippe for £15 and Morpheus for £5 (a pen and ink drawing of Morpheus, Somnus, Amor Lachrymosus, and Nox). Dakyns has bought Isaiah for £25. I think they are all worth having. Cydippe has faults of drawing and has Solomon's peculiar way of working colours into flesh tints which don't exactly belong there : but is a brilliant bit. . . . The pen and ink of Morpheus is a remarkably poetic subject, thoroughly original.

You are right about "The Arve to the Rhone." * I instinctively felt the same when at first I left out that last stanza. It does not do to round off some fugitive verses too much ; and the end, in this case, had better be left vague. . . .

What you say about Chopin I quite agree with. His spell is extraordinarily strong, and no one has so immediately translated intense and subtle emotion into sound. It is absolutely naked passion. Behind all I always seem to hear in his music the *râle de la mort*, and I cannot bear to hear more than, at most, two things of his at one time. It becomes too much to stand.

* Published in "Many Moods."

60.—To H. S. *Clifton, Nov.* 30.

We hope you will come here as settled. Any day after the 23rd is right for us. Up to that date head-masters will be about the place and filling our house. Should you, however, wish to be here at the same time as the masters, we can, I dare say, make room.

Graham will be here I doubt not. He is translating Xenophon and means to stop at home for that work this winter.

Well: your letter contains great news about the Ghosts. I do not know what to feel. On the whole I am glad. Only I hope all your time will not have been spent without some result for the public. You ought to announce in some way your experience. Neither Graham nor I can understand your second remark—about the futility of self-analysis. It seems to contain something more than a philosophical reference. There will be much to talk about all round when you come. What does Myers think about the Ghosts? If you intend to be explicit when you come, I will not press questions upon you. But your laconic little letter stimulates inquisitiveness.

I am writing away much as usual. There is a new volume of "Studies of Greek Poets" all but ready for press.

I have also been studying Hegel a good deal: the "Aesthetik" and the "Logik." The former is very interesting, but he seems to me not to have entertained the really difficult questions of æsthetics—what is the Canon of beauty in general and in the particular arts, what makes us call one thing ugly and another beautiful? He is so absorbed in defining what *das sinnliche Scheinen der Idee* means that he leaves practical critical questions alone. As for the "Logik," I cannot learn to walk on my

head just quite enough to understand it. I can never get rid of the notion that the whole thing starts with a series of postulates: God is; God is knowable; God is a spirit; know the nature of human thought and you will know God.

I wonder what you think about R. Browning's new poem? I had to review it, and had to say I could not bear it. It produces on me the same disagreeable impression as my own poems do on some people.

C.'s love. I am writing in her room at the foot of her bed with *all* my family around me.

61.—To H. F. B. *Clifton, Feb.* 15.

Your letter came to me like the drops of dew on thirsty corn—a metaphor borrowed from Clytemnestra, by the way, but truly expressive of what I felt, when I read the words that brought again the hours that I have lost. I don't think I could write like this, unless I felt myself very near to death; which indeed I do just now, I am so ill. If I were a poor man, bound to keep my children by my daily toil, I should certainly have to die soon. As it is, I may yet escape death for a season, for, perhaps, a few short years, by flying to the South and getting my sad body filled with sun.

. . . . .

When I am dying, I think I shall hear music and the voice of friends whom I have loved.* But enough of this. I do not mean, *pro virili mea parte* at least, to say die unneededly. . . . Do not forget, if I come back from Italy once yet again, that we are bound for the Bel Alp with boxes of books next July. There, if I am yet alive, I know that life will fill me; and we will talk of grave philosophy, and walk together on the divine hills. You

* This forecast was fulfilled. Letter of February 22, 1893, p. 267.

see how direfully I cling to the deepest things in my life now—to friendship and to love and to study.

"Eudiades" and the "Cretan Idyll" are *not* dreams. For that I, for one, can answer. But that they are visionary in this age, I readily admit, and therefore I never sought to give the poems publicity; "Lest the wise world should look into your moan." Shakspeare was right there.

Have you read "Joseph and his Brethren"*? If not, do so. It is a miracle of poetic beauty, a pearl fetched up from the deep seas of oblivion by that strong diver Swinburne.

"I am again for Cydnus, to meet Mark Antony."

Who said that, and when, and why is it the most concentrated piece of poetry in English?

62.—To H. F. B. *Bologna, April* 22.

Your refreshing letter came into my hands here to-day among a heap of proofs, business correspondence and epistles of friends. . . . I do wish you had been with us during the last three weeks! We drove from Genoa along the Eastern Riviera in lovely weather, took the train at Chiavari, and so came through burning sunset lights to Pisa. Thence passed straight through Florence to Arezzo, and drove across the Apennines to Borgo San Sepolcro, Città di Castello, Perugia, Assisi, Spello, Trevi, Spoleto, Foligno—a wonderful series of Etruscan Umbrian towns, where we lived in quaint hotels, drinking excellent wine, avoiding railways, seeing nothing but Italians—such glorious men, beautiful, with princely manners, grave discourse, and graceful gaiety. After this, as the weather broke, we took rail from Foligno to Rimini: there drove up to the little eagled-nested republic of San

* By Charles Wells.

Marino, and on to Urbino among its solemn mountain crags, and down again to Pesaro. To-day we have come on to Bologna, and are turning our faces homewards. The rain has set in for bad. . . . You would have enjoyed a service we heard on Good Friday in the sombre Duomo of Perugia. It was the ceremony of anathematizing Judas.* The Penitential and Passion Psalms were sung to a monotonous chaunt of exquisitely simple outline, by three solo voices in turns—Soprano, Tenor, Bass: at the end of each Psalm a candle before the altar was extinguished, till all light and hope and spiritual life went out for the damned soul. The Soprano was a marvellous being: he had the fullness of a powerful man's chest and larynx, with the pitch of a woman's and the timbre of a boy's voice. He seemed able to do what he chose in prolonging and sustaining notes, with wonderful effects of *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, passing from the wildest and most piercing *forte* to the tenderest *pianissimo*. The whole Church throbbed with the vibrations, and the emotional effect was as though Christ's Soul were speaking through the darkness to our souls. I never before heard a *castrato* sing in tune.

There was also a very interesting Easter Mass in the Lower Church at Assisi above the grave of St. Francis—the shrine that seems still to hold the spirit of St. Francis like a sacramental urn. We must go to these places together some day.

63.—To H. F. B. *Clifton, May* 2.

We came home on Saturday, having travelled without stay from Turin, where, after a week of deluge, we left the plain of Lombardy and the snow-burdened Alps blazing in Phœbean splendour. I hurried back thinking to get some time at Clifton before my Lectures at the

* It was, of course, the *Tenebræ*.

Royal Institution called me to London. But when I arrived I found that Dr. Beddoe, to whom I had written about my health, had put a veto on these lectures and written to the Secretary of the R.I., telling him I could not fulfil my engagement. It is provoking. If I had known this, we should have stayed another two weeks in Lombardy. Yet I believe he is right in checking me thus. I have never lost my cough, and I feel still extremely weak. Ill health is a terrible cross to me. Here is another instance: after all the work I have done in licking the Bristol University College into shape, I am not put upon its Council; and I cannot complain, because I know that my residence at Clifton will be always liable to interruption by these health journeys. I had taken much pains with my three lectures on Florence and the Medici. They lie before me now, a goodly MS. volume, destined apparently to lie so—*inutilis alga.*

I do not often indulge in these complaints. What indeed is the use? Yet I feel inclined to unburden to you some portion of my life's bitterness. Friendship and such community as we enjoy are a great solace when other sources of strength fail. I finished the printing of my Greek Poets, and herewith I send you the proofs of the last chapter. . . . Please keep them: for, until the book is actually bound up, I know not whether I may not want them again.

64.—To H. F. B. [*Clifton*], *July* 10.

I said little, because silence seemed to me best, and we parted. Now I am rehearing Don Giovanni in my brain, putting the tragic Titiens and the womanly Christine Nilsson into movement in my puppet-show of thought, and listening to the clear-cut intonation of the

excellent Trebelli. And, as I think of it, I hear the wood-notes of that orchestra upon the stage, and the divine thrummings of the guitar beneath Elvira's window, and the mock invitation to the Statue; and the tumult sweeps across me of the troubled ball-scene, and the charnel orchestration of the banquet. I wonder whether you will feel how all of this is poetry—the inmost soul and spiritual substance of romance sequestered from our sphere of moral judgments and diurnal deeds, and yet withal dramatically true by the quintessence of melodic utterance.

I am much impressed by your strong preference for lyrism. It makes me feel you have still to travel a broad deep sea of beauty, whereof lyrism is but the part. And I look with expectation to what this hearing of Don Giovanni will have done for you. Take on trust that the lyric leads stepwise to the drama; not that it is less intense, for it is more intense, but that its limitations are, so far, more strait.

Oh! perhaps you are hearing "Vedrai, carino!" now, or perhaps you are hearing "Deh! Vieni alla finestra," or perhaps it is the fateful sea of the divinely unconscious minuet played over by those lights of human passion and ephemeral actions! I can hardly bear to think of it.

65.—To H. F. B. *Clifton, July* 17.

. . . I am happy that Don G. arranges himself so comfortably in your mind. Notice next time the instrumentation of some of the recitative passages. I never am bored by the singing speech of operas, but in Mozart it quite pleases me.

What your mother says about the Adorante and the Flandrin is a good *mot*. But I can't help thinking: worse

luck then for the modern spirit if the ancient is erect, prayerful, praiseful, gazing out upon the world, the modern bowed in silence and in sorrow, veiled from looking on the earth to love it. Still so it is, the contrast is well expressed in those figures.

L—— ought not to have talked beforehand as he did about that professorship if he really wanted it: and as for A——, what I find every day is that literary gifts and actual cleverness are only a small part of what makes an able man. No one doubted the mere intellectual superiority of L—— to A——; but that is not all.

66.—To H. F. B. *Clifton, July* 29.

I have very mixed feelings as usual about going away. I wish I were *there.* I hate going. And I am just now in a state of dolorousness about my literary work. It seems to come to so little in result, while it is so much in labour; and yet I do not get enough labour into it somehow. "Something is wrong, there needeth a change." *Pro virili parte* is all I can keep repeating to myself.

I wish I could give you the net result of my experience in literature. I think I have a net result to give, and I shall try to tell you what it is if you take to study as a life-work. The difficulty is that experience has to be bought, and when it is bought half a life is lost. No beginner can take the counsel of an old stager for what it is really worth. My experience is definite as to (i) choice of work, (ii) method of study, (iii) moral self-government. In each of these three things I made partial shipwreck from want of clear vision at the outset; and if I do anything more in the future, it will be by the light of what I have learned very painfully. Good-bye till Monday.

Take some book of joy. I shall have a little Shelley and a "Paradise Lost."

67.—To H. F. B. *Chamonix, Sept* 5.

I have just got yours of the first, and am glad to hear you reached London safely. After we took our farewell look at you we lived two mortal long days in a downpour at Vernayaz. The inn was good; food and wine excellent. So I went in for stuffing my lean frame, and got much better than I had been since I was last in Italy. The Rhone rose; the Pissevache came down in a cloud of foam; and the torrent of the Trient brought logs of pine upon its muddy swollen waters, which the peasants of Vernayaz fished for with long poles and hooks, uttering dismal cries. I sat and wrote; and by chance it happened that Costelloe was there. I was glad to make his acquaintance and have a talk about Zeller. On the 1st about 6 a.m. we looked out and saw a little blue sky. So we got one cart for ourselves and another for the luggage, and drove off over the Tête Noire Pass, reaching Chamonix about 7.30 p.m. The day got gradually better, till before noon it was splendid—fresh snow on all the heights, the glaciers glittering, and the pine forests hung with innumerable sparkles of intensest quivering light. The descent into this valley was superb; for fleecy vapours curled about the Aiguilles of Mont Blanc, and the sunset flame pierced them and burned on snow and rock behind them; so that there was fire before and behind, and the mountain of the Lord was in a mist of changeful glory.

I feel stronger here than I have done at all in the Alps this year. I have a big room with a balcony up 100 steps from the street. As I sit and write, I look up over the meadows and pinewoods, to the glaciers and

very summit of Mont Blanc. There is not a cloud in the sky. Sun and moon and stars walk along those snows and crags in undiminished clearness. Graham and I have had two good walks on glaciers by ourselves, and yesterday we were out ten hours in a long expedition over the Brevent and the northern ridges in continual view of this great chain. I wish you had been here, There is something indescribably good in this place—its union of the sublimest scenery with the tenderest detail of meadow and forest. You would not say again the Alps had no ferns, I think!

68.—To H. S. 3, *Victoria St., S.W., Feb.* 7.

We are in London for three lectures on Florentine History I am giving at the Royal Institution. The Poetry Professorship is progressing. I am definitely standing. My most formidable opponent (as you may perhaps have seen from the *World* last week) is the Bishop of Derry. But he is not as yet actually in the field.

How does your warfare with the Hegelians go on? I read your paper in January *Mind*. It has made the Oxford people rather sore. Green, whom I saw a few weeks since, was considering whether it would be worth while to explain his point of view, and his disciples were crying "Exurgat Deus."

I do not forget the Alps in June. I hope, as far as I am concerned, it may come off. But I have one or two hampering conditions. Not the least of these is the necessity of going to Florence for purposes of study: and I cannot at present see how to work that in with so early a start for the high Alps. Much too must depend on the Professorship. If I get that, I shall have to be in Oxford in October probably.

69.—To H. F. B. *Piacenza, May* 15.

I have just got yours of the 3rd, which has been waiting for me some days while I was rained up at Varese. You heard right. I was not strong enough to go to Greece. Dr. Bright told me plainly at Cannes that the long riding journeys and the bad food might be fatal to me. All my Greek books are packed up at Milan!

I am still far from well. This last illness, as usual, has borne upon my nerves. I do not sleep, and am plagued with alternations of wretched ennui and wild mental excitability.

It does me good to hear that you have dipped into the "Revival of Learning" and like it. There *is* a great deal of hard work in that volume. It was the sense of this which made me pause to think, when you and Pearson at Saas said I was the biggest loafer you knew. Remembering that in seven years I have written and published seven books, involving much study and observation and artistic effort, I wondered how I could have had time to loaf:—but when I saw the truth of your remark, it proved to me what an amount of languor is compatible with an even excessive literary energy. This is the curse of the literary life:—its intense cerebral activity is often relieved against a background of sluggishness, inertia, despondency, and idle dreaming.

I was even better pleased by what you say about the "Lieder-kreis." Those little poems are the snowdrops and primroses of my spring.

Don't think me very egotistical for dwelling on these words of yours. I am living in the wilderness at present, and I want support. It does me good to be reminded that I have a soul and spiritual powers—like Tannhäuser when he heard the echo of his own old music in the Venusberg, and woke once more to life,

I wish you were here. The old towns are as nice as ever, and I do a good deal of study in them; but your sympathy would make what is very crooked with me straighter.

This is Tuesday night at Piacenza. From the dates you mention, I suppose your schools began last Friday and that you are in the thick of them. May things go well with you! But I feel most satisfaction to think that ere this reaches you, you will be free of schools. I hope to be back before the month is out. Will you come to us at Clifton later in June? If Warren * is with you, give him my love.

70.—To H. F. B. *Bristol, July 6.*

I ought to have written you a line on the appearance of the list. Green is away, so I have heard no details yet about your work. I feel the result to be on the whole satisfactory: for probably we shall find that a certain portion of your papers were first class. I think it important for you to find out what you did of really first rate, because you ought at least to get, as the material result of so much trouble, the consciousness of power. I shall therefore try to discover from Green. It is a blessing it is over; and a second, if nothing to be proud of, is nothing to be ashamed of. You have done your duty to yourself and the College; and you have done, even so, far more than I believe when you left Clifton, Percival expected of you.

I was so much interested in a letter I got from you when I was ill, about Clifton as against Oxford. I wonder what the Siren-charm of Clifton is. I used to feel it as a boy. It spoiled Harrow for me. I used to lie awake at night at Harrow seeing in my soul the

* Now President of Magdalen College, Oxford.

woods and the rocks and the down. Then *you* have the place Clifton and the School in one.

I am toiling up the hill of convalescence. I hate it. It is like being Sisyphus and Tantalus in one—for ever rolling up the heavy stone, and for ever seeing joys beyond my grasp. More fervently than ever do I bid you sacrifice everything to health.

I have translated fifty-eight of Campanella's Sonnets. They are very queer things.

71.—To H. S. *Davos Platz, Aug.* 26.

Your letter and card reached me together this morning. If you have seen the Greens, you will have heard all that is necessary to know about me. I shall however tell you myself how the matter stands, since I think it is now for the first time during our friendship really very serious. The doctor here talks a little English, and after his examination of me on my arrival he made this speech, which puts the case in a nutshell: "Your right lung, he is pretty well. Your left lung, he is nothing: he is infiltrated from top to bottom." I had not had such plain speaking before; but what Sir William Jenner told me came to the same thing, since he impressed upon me that I had just one chance, and just now or never, of pulling round a bit. I fear that disease of a bad type has been progressing undisputed till it is now a fight for existence rather than a choice of cures. My own sensations bear out this opinion: for I have suffered at intervals during eighteen months or so in a way that is new to my experience; and yet I am conscious of being so sophisticated in sensibility by the habit of nervous and other maladies, that I did not at any moment think it needful to detail these subjective symptoms to a new doctor. I just bore them until the

hæmorrhage of May, which was severe, shook me out of my security and made me sure that a new chapter in my history had begun.

It is our purpose to remain here till October and then spend the winter on the Nile; that is, if I can bear the journey: if I get weaker, I shall either stay here through the winter or go to San Remo. If I get through the winter, we shall spend the summer in the Engadine or here. When we shall return to England I know not. I dare not look a few weeks forward until I am assured that the morbid changes in the lung have been arrested. All of course depends on that.

Graham is with us, and we are very quiet and happy here. I do not like to think that my book is shelved for an indefinite period, and that it may very likely be never finished. That is really the only thing that gives me restlessness or sorrow. For the rest, I can be really thankful to have at last given over the struggle that was so painful to me—the struggle to carry the burden of life like other men. Much of those mental troubles I used to talk to you about sprang from the nervous exhaustion caused by that continual effort. My spirit seems at length lucid again and tranquil; and nothing but physical pain and weakness comes between me and beauty of the world now.

I have just finished a translation of Campanella's and Michael Angelo's Sonnets. All through this illness I have been doing them bit by bit: and now I think of getting them published in a little volume. Campanella is very wonderful.

Good-bye. This is dreadfully egotistic. But I do not often write a letter, and I want this to stand for some time.

72.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov. 7.*

One learns to understand that antique instinct against sending good news straight off. It seems almost sure to provoke fate. Now after writing so cheerfully to you—so jubilantly—last time, I have rather to change my note. I don't know whether I presumed on thinking myself better, or whether this hot weather, arriving so unseasonably, has affected me, or whether I have become restless in brain; but anyhow I am not so well again.

I *do* know Chianti. It is often very good. It is the Tuscan *vin ordinaire*, and bears the same relation to good Montepulciano as Medoc to Château Laffite. Hence conclude what old Montepulciano must be!

I want some head-work and cannot fix on any. This, I think, is making me feverish. Those sonnets of M. A. and T. C. were just the thing for me—definite pieces cut and needing delicate workmanship. At present I am reading various biographies of Shelley with a view to writing a short account of him and of his works. I shall be in good company, doing this—in the company of Goldwin Smith, Mark Pattison, Froude, the Dean of St. Paul's,* and John Morley, each of whom is to produce a life of some great author.

73.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov.* 11.

I am beginning to get my proofs of the book on Michael Angelo and Campanella. The type is very good and clear. In shape the book will be about the same as my "Introduction to Dante." I shall have it bound in almost invisible-blue shiny cloth—deep lapis-lazuli colour—with black stars stamped upon the corners, if I can get the cover I want.

Have you seen an article by Pater in the Oct.

* R. W. Church.

Fortnightly on the school of Giorgione? It is extremely interesting, and if it were not so dogmatic and so contemptuous towards his brother critics, I should welcome it with more pleasure as a contribution to the science of æsthetics. His main point is that contemporary art-critics use poetry as their standard for judging of the fine arts, and that they ought to put music in this place. The argument on which he founds this view is subtle, and he gets, in the Venetian school of painting, a seeming support. But I do not think it will hold water. At any rate it is equally wrong to take Music, as it is to take Poetry, as the standard of all other arts. I think of sending a critique of Pater's view to the *Cornhill*, if Stephen will have it.

I wonder whether Noel has seen this Essay. It will make him angry, as Pater says the best Poetry is that in which the sense is swooning into nonsense. So it is a defence of what Noel calls the "Mesopotamian" theory of Poetry.

I got a copy of the *Cliftonian* last night. It looks so odd here—the little boyish letters about things out of gear in the place. There is a really remarkable poem about a soul just dead—embodying some spiritualistic idea—signed Σ. Who can that be?

The utter absence of all interesting topics of thought here has stupefied me. I cannot find anything to say even to you, though if you were here, there would be plenty. It is a kind of narcôsis I suffer from, breaking out into frantic irritabilities.

Dr. A. has been writing two articles in the *Lancet* on Davos, praising it. He gives a paragraph to me and to my conversation with him, in which I am described as "a very well-known and most accomplished writer with infiltration of one lung and a cavity." The result of this is that I am become an object of ridicule to the

Kurgäste, and even little —— came up to condole with me for the exposure of my personality! I don't care. I am reading Shelley. I read "The Cenci" this morning. But what arrived the other night? A nice little life of Shelley by a Mr. Barnett Smith, who sent it to me as a token of his admiration of my critical work! Is it worth while writing another? So now good-bye.

74.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov.* 14.

I have heard to-day from Noel. I am glad you see so much of him. There is something, however, electrical and odd about him which will, I hope, not fill you with unrest. I have no doubt the death of his son Eric and certainly the lapse of years has changed him. Has he given you "Ravensburg" to read; and what do you think of it? He says you are going to Corsica together in Spring. That will be excellent. But don't forget that if I am well enough to go to Capri, you have promised to be with me there in the spring.

It has snowed for two days and nights—soft English snow. And now the sun is coming out again, and it will thaw—Confound it! Roden's letter has made me horribly jealous of your enjoyments. I am in a devilish condition. Swimming—talking philosophy under the olives—dining in that pretty little villa—pic-nicking at Taggia—oh! you lucky dogs! The only thing you can in decency do is to write a great deal to me, and tell me how the days go.

Nov. 16.

I laid this letter aside the other day; and now that I find it again, I have one or two small things to tell you. First, the snow has come—not in large quantity, but the whole valley is wondrous white and the sky at

evening is very splendid. Secondly, I have not been getting on well. Ruedi (Dr. Karl) says I have caught a cold—but how or where, I do not know. I am sometimes most weary of living, and sometimes I long for more life passionately. Thirdly, Fichte has come to-day. A thousand thanks for it. If I get at all strong again, I shall read it. If I do not, I will make some one read it out to me. At present I am not good for anything but looking through Italian *Novelle*. Fourthly, your last letter from San Remo has come. If you had told me your Florence address, I would have given you Miss Poynter's. She won't be in Rome yet.

75.—To H. S. *Davos, Nov.* 23.

I shall soon send you what I am proud of. It is the translation of Michael Angelo and Campanella, made, the larger portion of it, while I was still too weak to take a book down from the shelf. I had often to wait for the meaning of a difficult phrase till some one could do this for me.

I should not be surprised if all our future intercourse on this terraqueous globe were confined to interchange of written and printed words. If I live through the winter I do not much think I shall ever go back to England. I am serious about this.

For three weeks I have had a cold; and the weather is just now horrible, the Fahrenheit thermometer going from 6° to 142° within twelve hours. Well, well.

76.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov.* 23.

On the receipt of your letter from the Quirinale Hotel I sent you a card last night. I think, if you care to send to the Londres, you will find a longish letter

from me, describing our state of being. But there was nothing of much importance in the letter—I am delighted with yours. I cannot tell you what a refreshment they are to me in this confinement. I have learned, I hope, that as *φθόνος ἄπεστι τοῦ τῶν θέων χοροῦ*, so it should find no place in my heart. You could not do me a greater kindness than to send me some photos. Statues, views, drawings, people, any would be acceptable, if carefully chosen. I get great pleasure, as it is, from a "Garden Party" of Giorgione (Lord Lansdowne's) and an Angel of Fra Angelico—both near my bed. The moonlight on the snow is so clear sometimes that, as I lie awake, I can see these creatures making music.

Should you like my proofs of Michael Angelo's Sonnets sent, I could easily send you one of my copies. Frankly, I feel some of them to be very good; especially about a dozen which I did just before I left Clifton last summer. If I do send the proofs they shall be clean revises; and when they are complete, you can have them bound in Roman vellum to make a volume separate from what the world will get!

Your letter was not at all more gushing than is right considering where you have been. It is a pity you did not get into the great Piazza at Bologna (I somehow fancy you did not), where the Neptune of Gian Bologna stands in moonlight. How well I know those autumn evening scenes at Florence! The chestnut toasters, and the great cloaks!—I found a passage the other day in my own poem of "Odatis" which exactly describes our stagnant state here.

> "Startled then from sleep,
> She watched the melancholy winter heap
> Snow upon snow; and joy seemed far, and bare
> Were earth and heaven within the loveless air.

Nor came there any sign ; nor might she hear
From wandering merchant or lone traveller
Aught from the wished-for southlands ; for the hand
Of winter lay like iron on all the land,
And silence round her brooded, and the Spring
Was as an unimaginable thing."

We, thank goodness, are luckier than Odatis for we have the post !

77.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov. 26.*

It has been snowing nearly incessantly now for forty-eight hours, and the face of the world is changed. All the inequalities of the hills have been smoothed down into soft swelling slopes and mounds. The sun came out for one hour yesterday, and then the glass rose to 143° Fahrenheit. It is not very cold inside the house.

Go some evening about nine o'clock and smoke your pipe on the terrace under the ilex trees before the Villa Medici. The view of Rome at night from there is very wonderful.

Nov. 28.

I got your letter of the 22nd last night. I understand the first impression of Rome being what you say. Florence is much more intelligible. But in the long run you will find that Rome, besides being grander, is far more beautiful. It has a fascination that is inexhaustible. You make me happy with your letters about the things I know so well. They rise up before me with new pleasure as I read. I was disappointed at first sight with the Stanze—and the Loggia I do not now care for ; it looks as if it had always been there and had somehow been done by oneself a long time ago. But long familiarity with Raphael, as with Mozart, discovers strength and meaning infinite beneath that mask of graceful facility.

78.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Dec.* 8.

The first proofs (of Michael Angelo's Sonnets) have now all come. The sustained height of M. A.'s mood is most extraordinary. A wonderful light shines, for me, from these sonnets on to the ideal forms of the Sistine roof. And how graceful he can be!—note *e.g.* No. XX. I spell his name Michael Angelo for the same reason that I should use Titian and not Tiziano. I shall have a word about this in my Prefatory Note.

I have made my volume of Poems. When you come you shall see the selection. It is quite long enough without a single "turbid" poem. There are a good many about Greek comradeship, however. I think the time has come for me to say something on this topic. I have got together also as many as I could in Terza Rima, so that the book, in spite of a general miscellaneousness, will have a specific character.

Dec. 12.

Yours of the 8th has come to-night; and I am too hurried to answer it properly. *Le mie amor* is right. M. A. could not spell, and *mia* is a bad misprint. M. A. is *never* "sweet" as far as I can see. It is a word that does not come within his hemisphere. There are depths and heights of beauty in him beyond tears—but there is no sugar, not even any honey.

79.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Dec.* 21.

It is quite true that wherever beauty is there is also sweetness. Even in the "Inferno" of Dante we find it. But when a critic isolates that quality and dwells upon it as distinctive—selecting it and not allowing it to be implied in the superior quality or lost in the sum of

complex ingredients that go to make up sublime beauty, he then—it seems to me—justifies us in saying "sweetness is no mark of the 'Inferno' or the Sistine Chapel. It is there—it is necessary to beauty—you find it in Signorelli's 'Paradiso' and in Beethoven's C Minor Symphony; but when you talk of the sweet things in art, you remind me of Mozart's Sonatas, Greuze's girls, Meleager's Epigrams; and what has Michael Angelo as a poet or a painter done that he should be ranked with these? He includes these and swallows them up and goes beyond them and gives us so much more of every sort that we cannot afford to sign him with the seal we keep for them." This is the true statement of my meaning. I hate that antithesis between the strong and the sweet and so forth; and then the trick of saying "after all here is *ex forti dulcedo*, honeycombs in the lion's carcase," as if the critic had discovered a synthesis which he knows was absolutely and essentially necessary —once granted that the subject of his criticism had beauty. It is equally tawdry with telling us that Mozart can be strong, because the first thing that strikes the vulgar mind in his Ideal of Beauty is its sweetness. The blending of sweetness and strength *is* Beauty; and if you say "that object is beautiful" you mean to say "that object combines strength and sweetness." There!

1878.] 80.—To H. F. B. *Spezia, Oct. 8.*

We have made a good journey so far in brilliant weather. We left Milan on the 5th and slept at Parma. There I made a bargain with the Post Master for a carriage and post-horses to be changed at every stage between Parma and Sarzana; and on the 6th we drove the whole of that long way—about ninety English miles,

over high Apennines—in thirteen-and-a-half hours. We only stopped once for half an hour to lunch. It was like a Roman journey—a splendid road—perpetual and rapid motion—a constant succession of most glorious landscape including all varieties of delicate and rich scenery. Of course I was very tired, and it was not exactly what Ruedi would have recommended.

Yesterday we went to Fosdinovo, a Castle of the Malaspini, where Dante lived with the Marchese Moroello when he was finishing the "Inferno." Then we came on here and found a gorgeous inn. To-day the weather is bad, and we cannot get either to Lerici or Porto Venere.

I think we shall stay here till Friday morning, and then go to Carrara, Viareggio and Pisa. Our plan is to go from Pisa to Volterra and Siena, Chiusi, and so on.

1879.] 81.—To H. S. *Capri, April* 30.

The fiat has gone forth, confirmed by my own feeling, that I am not to see England this year. We shall spend the summer in Western Switzerland or Savoy, and return to Davos for winter. I still think no place so safe as Davos. Life anywhere else reminds me of the slender grasp I have on Life.

What you say about Myers' "Virgil" is quite true. Only I go further, and think it quite remarkable; among the best critical products of this century. It is so mellow in tone, so elevated in emotion. He recited the translations to me at Davos, and they warmed my blood like old wine.

I am writing the fourth part of "The Renaissance in Italy." That is my diurnal work. I want to trace the vernacular literature from its origins and to make a full exposure of it in my own period.

We came pretty straight from Davos, dropping our family on the Lake of Geneva. I was only twenty-four hours in Naples ; yet I contrived to be assaulted by three thieves and robbed there—robbed of watch and chain, £40 in Italian notes and a letter of credit for £1000. It was a nasty experience, but, as yet, it has led to no results, and I only hope I may not be called on to identify the fellows and get into the *longueurs* of the Italian police.

Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Green are here in this hotel. He is a pleasant companion, a good talker.

82.—To H. F. B. *Ischia, May* 14.

I was glad to hear from you from Naples. . . . We were shut up in Capri till Monday, and then we meant to go to Sorrento; but a scirocco got up that favoured our departure for Ischia. So we got off at 8 a.m. and had a fine but stormy passage. It was quite grand, shouldering and mounting the great waves that were rolling into the gulf of Naples. We shipped a good deal of water, but we had a jolly crew and came safe to shore soon after noon. I enjoy that rough sea tremendously and get wild pleasure out of the distant landscapes revealed by moments when the boat climbs to the crest of a wave, and blotted out again by solid blue when she dives down into the trough.

We arrived before the bad weather settled on us again, and found ourselves here in a wonderful garden of cactuses and every sort of flower. This island is far more luxuriant than Capri. It has a richer wilder beauty, less sculpturesque but more sympathetic to the temper of the south. . . . Yesterday was fine. We spent it in two long carriage drives which showed us about two-thirds of the whole coast. To-day we have been up

Monte Epomeo—the mountain—an old volcano. I wished for you. It was a wonderful ride up through lanes deep-sunken in the lava, over-rioted with greenery and flowers, then along the ridge with heavenly prospects over sea and shore, and so up to weird fantastic pinnacles of an old crater, whence the panorama, bathed in blue, is superb. We left our horses there and climbed straight down the precipices to our inn, led by a fawn-like goat-herd, bright-eyed, dark-browed, with lovely gentle manners. The high cliffs of Monte Epomeo were red with *pamporcini* * and anemones. I picked one which I send you. I think we shall go and sleep at Pompeii to-morrow, next day to S. Germano for Monte Cassino: next day to Albano: then two days at Rome. If the weather holds good we shall probably go by Terni to Gubbio, Urbino, Rimini—then by Ravenna and Ferrara to Venice. I am dreadfully tired—a little walk, anything in fact, makes me feel what a wreck of my old self I am.

83.—To H. F. B. *Rome, May* 19.

I send you to-day a copy of my book. I found your two letters at the Bankers'. Thank you very much, especially for the one from Venice, which had so much of my own soul in it that I read it with infinite sympathy.

We had a golden day last Thursday; a perfectly calm sail from Ischia to Pozzuoli, by Capo Miseno and Procida, and across the Bay of Baiae. Then we drove into Naples, and witnessed at the gate of Pozzuoli an attempted but unsuccessful assassination. We had two carriages, and the driver of the first was pulled off the box by another man, who had his knife out, and tried to rip the other's bowels up. A *Guardia* drew his sword

* Cyclamen.

and cut in between the two ; another man jumped on our box, and, leaving the two brawlers in an indescribable tumult of ragamuffins, we drove on as fast as we could.

That night we slept at Pompeii in the house of a *contadino*, a very curious place about which I will tell you. Next day we saw Pompeii and got to S. Germano where the inn is excellent. On Saturday it began to rain ; but we rode in spite of it to Monte Cassino. I had had fever all the preceding night. The costumes at S. Germano and the views up to Monte Cassino in spite of the mists were very repaying, and so was the monastery. We came down again and got to Rome that night ; but my pain became torture, and at night the fever was very high. I saw Dr. Aitken yesterday. My body seems honeycombed in all directions, and I cannot last very long ; and yet the spirit is inextinguishably, unconquerably young as ever. Only too intensely vibratory to the beautiful things it was made to love.

Rome is extremely splendid in this stormy May weather. How long we shall stay I do not know. I am waiting Aitken's opinion. If he will allow me to do so, I still hope to go *viâ* Terni, Gubbio, Urbino, Rimini, Ferrara, to Venice. But I must be guided by his opinion as to fatigue, since he hinted that this nuisance was aggravated by my resolution to do more than is good for me.

If you really mean to write about Dossi, you must see his pictures at Ferrara and also the "Jester" at Modena : I think the subject is good. But you must get him up, and he is all about.

I have seen lovely sights of things and people here. Is there a place so good as Rome ?

84.—To H. F. B. *Vevey, June* 14.

On the *Via dolorosa* so far again. I stupidly brought no work with me from Geneva; nothing but a grim book "The Hour will Come." Please read that. It is all about a beautiful young man martyred in a mediæval cloister—he puts out his own eyes. The woman who wrote it, Gräfin von Hillern, wrote also "Geier-Wally" or "Vulture-Maiden," which you may have read. Both are tremendous poems, but this is just too poignant.

The last two days at Geneva I occupied with the sheets of my Greek Poets, making the American Edition. It is puzzling work when one begins to pull old essays about: one does not know where to end. And these were written when I was so much younger, hopefuller, more elastic. They are quite amusing in their luxuriance and wantonness. I must end by leaving them very nearly as they are, adding some translations, enlarging what I say about Euripides, but not attempting to give deeper unity or truer cohesion to the series. *Velox ætas præterit studio detenta.*

85.—To H. F. B. *Argentière, Aug.* 1.

I do not like leaving this place. The great gap opposite where the glacier comes down, and the village church, and the Arve, and now the new-mown meadows with their pines as foreground to Mont Blanc, and the woods where we sit in the morning, will all live with me when I am far away. But I am terribly tired. A long book is a most exhausting burden. I don't think I could do more work here. It is cruel thus to stifle the genial and beneficent influences of nature by persistent toil. I began Ferrari * to-day. It is a terrible style

* "Rivoluzioni d'Italia."

he has—such a flux of words, a wood of abstract thoughts —all of them essentially uncertain. I do not like your spending too much time over him. I am sure his views, though very clever, are not final. I wish you were at work on Sismondi. In the fortnight that remains, if this weather of gods and men endures, indulge your soul in some more good walks. It improves you to do this; and it is so right and natural! My youth and middle age are gone—and what have I got? Many good things, I know; the best being my family and my friends. But I should have liked to have used my youth in honourable pleasures more.

ÆT. 39.] 86.—To H. S. *Davos, Nov.* 18.

I think an exaggerated report of my being ill has got abroad. On the whole Ruedi believes I am better than I was last spring. He says that Nature, outraged by my excess in walking and working, has recalcitrated.

Since last February I have written two volumes of the "Renaissance in Italy," all but three chapters. They are the two final vols. on Italian Literature. Of course this is only the first rough composition; for, like Mill, I always now write twice when I am concerned with work requiring a wide sweep and sustained energy. The great thing is to get the masses properly blocked out in the first edition.

Besides this, I have had, in the same space of time, to prepare American editions of my studies of Greek Poets and all my Italian Sketches. Harper is going to bring out these two works, each in two volumes. And I have now rearranged them in their right order.

There has moreover been the preparation of a new English edition of the "Age of the Despots," to which I have added about 100 pages, as well as a great amount

of minute alteration. Smith and Elder have also asked for a new volume of poems. And I have been *considering* this. So you see my hands have been full. If I did not work with an almost abnormal facility, I should not have got through the mere grind. But I am afraid that this facility does not mean less but only more rapid and instinctive cerebration than in the case of slower workers. Therefore, I get sudden and inexplicable collapses like this last.

It is refreshing to me to hear that you liked my notes on Arnold's "Wordsworth." I wrote them just at the beginning of the collapse. What I wanted to do was to define my own position with regard to the essential qualities of poetry, a position that has been confirmed by the appalling results of my inquiries into Italian literature. It is really an awful abyss of frivolity and abomination, which forces a sober mind to reconsider the whole question of art in its relation to morality. I thought Arnold's conceited paradoxes would furnish a good platform for discussion. But having chosen that line of annotation and explication, I could not well proceed to a loftier and more organised treatment of my subject—within the narrow limits of a *Fortnightly* article. If I could be released from this dreadful Italian pathology, and if I were well enough to *lecture*, I should like to develope a series of definitions on matters relating to poetry and art—the result of years of thinking on the subject. This is the kind of work which, if I could be made Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and were able to use my position there, I would willingly devote some years to. Hush! I have no right to speak of *years*. I live really as one who holds his lease of life from week to week; and this is one cause of my feverish energy in writing.

1880.] 87.—To H. F. B. *Davos*, 6. iv. or 1880.

Get the March *Cornhill*, and read Tourguenieff's "Visions." It surpasses Hawthorne's narrow, thought-frozen efforts. It out-flies Hoffmann, Heine, Shelley, Noel . . . all. It is what we have felt under anæsthetics administered for operations, what we have summoned from nothing in fever. It is what the spirit-seekers follow. It is spirit-poetry, the poetry of the To Be. Has Europe waited for the Slavs to find out this? I think so.

88.—To H. S. *Clifton, July* 8.

The letter you wrote me to Davos about possible meetings, found me *here* a long while after it was written. I did not answer it as a thing of immediate importance, and I have since been so much occupied that I could not write a letter *de luxe*.

But to-day you have been very much with me. I have parted with my past by destroying nearly the whole of my correspondence, together with diaries and poems.

Among the mass of papers were a great many of your letters. I have kept a few. I was horribly unwilling to part with any. And yet they were so personal that, having resolved to destroy all personal elements of correspondence, I would not even exclude these. As I went through them, I felt that I had never before appreciated their wisdom and beauty, their clear-cut sincerity, their sweetness and strength. Reviewing the whole long record of my life revealed in these accumulated documents, I was struck very forcibly with two things. First with wonder that I should have retained any energy at all after such prolonged ill-health and mental and physical suffering and strange experiences

as made up my life between 1857 and 1863. The subsequent lung disease, from which I am now suffering, is no doubt the result of the strain of those years. But I marvel that I should have borne it so comparatively well at the time. It shows how powerful mere youth is. The second thing was a feeling of having been singularly blessed in the love and friendship of noble men and women, combined with a sense of my final unworthiness of them. There is one really sublime letter of yours which shadows forth a dread of change of our—all of us —undergoing the influences of the commonplace and being doomed in middle-life to walk wrapped up in mantles of convention, hiding our true selves.

Has something of the kind foreshadowed fallen upon some of us? That is what I now ask myself. It appears to me that I have gained tranquillity and comparative health by accepting the ordinary, by transactions of many sorts with my own nature, by ceasing to care as acutely as I did for either good or evil, by blunting my sensibilities and superinducing the callosity of indifference or vulgar scorn upon my one time thrilling fibres of sympathy.

I think this is so with me. Catherine, who helped me in the work of destruction, kept saying that I have become so much more healthy, calm, cheerful, good to live with. But, though I recognize that she is right, I am aware that this desirable result is to a large extent the form world-weariness assumes with me. It is loss of something, not clear gain,—exhausted, not harmonized, energies.

You are hardly in a position to compare experiences: for you have doubled your resources in the interval between that summer when we first talked together at 47 Norfolk Square and this July; whereas I have remained in all domestic relations (roughly speaking) stationary.

It was rather pretty to see Catherine and my four children all engaged in tearing up the letters of a lifetime! We sat on the floor and the old leaves grew above us mountains high. By the same fell stroke I destroyed the correspondence of my forefathers from the 17th Century—from an old Independent Minister who had known Bunyan—downwards.

Psychologically it interested me to note the change of tone in the letters of successive generations. Beginning with the ardent faith of the Puritan impulse; passing into earnest but formalized Methodism in the next two generations; feeling the breath of the French Revolution and physical science in my grandfather, but remaining within the limits of strict Puritan orthodoxy; in my father's correspondence with Sterling and F. Newman and F. Maurice and Jowett, taking a robust theistic complexion; and in mine with you and H. G. D. expanding finally into a free and gaseous atmosphere. The spiritual problem was the main matter of all these letters. But how that spiritual problem altered with each generation! And what—I said to myself—will be its form in *this*, the rising generation, if for example, it should present itself to my daughter Janet and her friends?

I feel rather like a criminal to have burned the tares and the wheat together of this harvest. I was driven to do so by having to break up this our home, and to go forth homeless. Old letters must have been put into a box to be rummaged and destroyed by my executors. I preferred a solemn concremation in my garden underneath the trees, attended with the *conclamatio* of my spirit as I said to the flaming pages "Avete atque valete." So you see we are about to leave Clifton Hill House: "To be let or sold"! I did not anticipate anything else, when I went away from it so ill three

years ago. Still in the interval a hope has arisen that I might live here. But I find myself unequal to it.

89.—To H. S. *Clifton, July* 31.

I left London on Thursday. Could not stand the noise and the powerful stimulus of the place. Got pretty high fever at night. There is nothing left for me but to moulder in the high Alps. I regret the necessity more than I can say; for I am sure it will bring a slow intellectual asphyxiation. Talking to my best friends does me so much good. There I have no stimulating society, and none of that stimulus which more than ordinarily perceptive people like myself get from sights and sounds imbued with human life.

Jenner was so unsatisfactory that I tried Quain on Thursday. He took, on the whole, the same view, but was perhaps a little more sanguine. Neither believed in my ultimate restoration to health. But Quain thinks I shall be able to prolong life and do good work, if I stick to Davos.

Jowett called yesterday, and spent the night. I had a pleasant talk with him. If only my friends would fly across and perch a day or two at Davos now and then! Well: perhaps they will. But I shall not make any new ones; and we *ought* to live in the stream of novelty as well as in the lakes of ancient loyalty.

90.—To H. S. *Clifton, Aug.* 14.

I send the catalogue of my books on art and archæology, and also some of my engravings. We shall have to leave this house on Sept. 15. Therefore, if a sale is effected, it ought to be done before that date. I do not feel much inclined to part with only the cream of the

collection to one purchaser; and this is what Colvin would naturally wish to take. Probably it would suit me on the whole best to have the whole lot sent to Sotheby for auction; and if the University of Cambridge competed for some numbers, this would help the sale!

Colvin will soon see whether there are things he wants in the lists, and will be able to decide at once if it is worth his while to purchase *en bloc.* Thank you very much for introducing the matter to his notice. To any offers or suggestions Colvin may make, I shall be most glad to give consideration. If these things realize a handsome sum, I have a project of founding a prize in my father's name to be competed for in one of our local institutions—the Fine Arts School, or the University College. But this is still unformed in my mind. It makes me wish to get the best price I can.

Our many petty affairs drag along. For all literary purposes this has been a summer wasted, or worse than wasted, for I am getting very tired and irritable. On the whole I am oppressed with a greater sense of failure and am less sanguine than ever I was before in all my life. The words of comfort you sent me a while since, were very pleasant, and I feel there are many points of brightness in the future. I do not dislike my Swiss home, and I am reconciled to many of its intellectual privations. Yet, all the same, life, as it is commonly understood in our society, has broken down—and not merely for me, but for all dependent on me.

91.—To H. S. *Clifton, Aug.* 24.

I received your letter with the note of what Colvin would like from my lists yesterday, and to-day the lists themselves came to hand.

I am still in many minds about how to dispose of all

these things. I reckon that if I send them up to auction I shall have to lose at least fifteen per cent. and perhaps as much as twenty, on the sum realized by the sale. If I dispose of the books to a local bookseller, which is the easiest way of doing the business, I shall get very much less than their real value ; but I shall save the percentage for commission and expenses and shall run no risk of a bad auction. I think I shall have to choose between these two methods. I do not see how I can place a portion with Quaritch for valuation, under the uncertainty of Colvin's getting the Syndicate to spend £100. And yet Colvin's marks show me that the books are more valuable than I expected they might turn out.

With regard to Flaxman and Retzsch, I really cannot put a price upon them. But if you do wish to have them, I could get the local bookseller to value, and let you have them at his price. I would send these as a present to Newnham, but that I have a plan for devoting the proceeds of this sale to some public cause in Bristol (a prize or scholarship) ; and it is my object therefore to get as much as I decently can.

I hate the whole thing.

92.—To H. F. B. *Basel, Sept.* 5.

It is long since I wrote to you. I have had to leave England very suddenly. The worry and work of getting out of our house, breaking down the carved work of its tabernacles, and spoiling all its treasuries, at last made me ill. I hurried all my business to an abrupt conclusion, left Catherine and the children, and came away last Thursday. . . . Something warns me we shall never have a home again. It is so sad to do what I have done that I almost would advise you not to root yourself into Newhall. If you do, I think you should stick to it,

whatever comes. What I have had to do is too grim. It is a kind of living death, and leaves me in the mood of Timon.

93.—To H. S. *Davos, Oct.* 26.

After reading your letter Catherine says there is no parallel between us. You have lived three years in your house, and now have let it furnished. Mine has been my home since I was ten years old, and I have sold everything that it contained. For a long time I felt sore—like a soldier-crab without his shell, molluscous properties being detected in me which my adventitious *habitat* had previously concealed. I am now getting sufficiently callous. But I feel that a new chapter is opened in life. It makes me younger, and at the same time less enthusiastic. Bohemian, cynical and capable of boredom—all in one. I fancy I shall not care for any home again, yet I am sure I don't want to return to the old one. Under these conditions, if I also lost my interest in writing, I dare say I should go bad.

I came here early in September ill. Now I am stronger, and have done much work. An *Encyclopædia Brit.* article on Italian History—fourteen centuries in twenty-one pages; but, as you know, they are long pages. The two last volumes of the "Renaissance" are now being worked at. I want to have them ready by next spring for publication.

We are house-seeking. I tried to buy a house called Schöngrund for £4200, but had it bought over me by Herr Coester. I have another in my eye. Failing this, I must build—*i.e.* be out of my house for the next two years and suffer all the boredom of building, with the daily misery of seeing this place overrun and disfigured before my eyes. Davos will, I fear, not be a nice place

to live in soon. And yet I don't know where to go. We have, however, come to the resolution of keeping all our children with us after next spring; and this is a step gained.

Our light afflictions are caused by too little ballast on the sea of life. Mrs. Sidgwick's, at the present moment, with all those solid young women on her hands, as well as so many unseasoned bricks and mortar * and unhouselled maid-servants, are derived from quite other and less bearable conditions. We deeply sympathize. But we feel she is equal to everything.

I am excited by what you say about Trevelyan's "Fox," and must get the book. Myers' "Wordsworth," too, is a pleasant piece to expect. Those red books are really excellent reading. I go to bed daily at 4 p.m., and Catherine reads to me for a couple of hours before dressing for dinner. We find Morley's Series just what suits us. It often occurs to me to think with horror: what would happen if literature failed me? If I did not care to write? I hope to goodness I shall not lose this διαγωγή, and now my great desire is to think of something *good* to do when the Renaissance is over. I am inclined to cut the Italians for a while. Do you think there would be room for a series of studies on my old friends the Elizabethan playwrights? I have, of course, almost innumerable chips which it would be pleasant to turn into literary shape. But the freshness of the spirit might be better preserved by taking a new topic. I have sometimes thought of writing a study of Graubünden history. But this would necessitate archive-hunting at Chur; and could I decipher mediæval MSS. in Davos-Deutsch and Romansch?

I am ashamed to write you such a frivolous letter. All my ἀπορίαι are on the surface.

* Building Newnham, Cambridge.

Yes: write to the bookseller, Mr. George, Park St., Bristol. He assures me the Dante will go to you; but it ought to have gone. He has a whole mass of books to overhaul and catalogue. This may account for the delay.

94.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov.* 17.

I shall be so glad to see you. We have no snow yet, and the air is often like the softest, blowiest of Channel breezes felt upon the downs by Failand. There is a very interesting man come—Louis Stevenson—a friend of Lang and Leslie Stephen—really clever, and curious in matters of style. He is at the Belvedere. I find him a great acquisition.

95.—To H. F. B. [*Davos Platz*], *Feb.* 27.

I cannot be sure of your address. But I must recover it from the vasty deep of letters, which will no doubt be easy.

Stephenson (Stevenson) has told me the whole history of his wife to-day. It is very curious and creditable to himself and her. I have apprehensions about his power of intellectual last. The more I see of him, the less I find of solid mental stuff. He wants years of study in tough subjects. After all a University education has some merits. One feels the want of it in men like him.

The single bottle of Forzato which survived your *παρουσία* has been devoted, you may care to hear, to the birthday feast of Christian Buol—in next month—for which I have ready a really pretty English claret-jug of glass and silver. I designed in fancy a little *festa* for the occasion, as I know these people like that sort of

thing. And I am glad enough of the precious liquid remains to inaugurate the opening glasses. The old Montagner is also now drunk out.

96.—To H. F. B. [*Davos*], *March* 9.

Yours of the 4th reached me last night. I am relieved that you comment on no bitter note in the first letter I wrote you. I felt there was one. I also thank you for sending me the verses. I will not flatter you with pretending that they are excellent poetry—except the outburst of the first two lines, which seem to me the whole. Better proof I could not have that you really understood me, and that the subject of our stormy conversation on the lake was absorbed in a still closer understanding. . . .

I wonder what the sonnet was I scribbled in your Pater. I remember pencilling it there. But I forget it—except the *motif* of the Bersagliere bugles. Will you write it out for me?

I do wish you could have happiness. But I cannot tell you how to get it. I only remember how, at your age, as my diaries (which I read out to you one day) reveal, I was haunted with the same illusion of not being happy. I believe really that it *is* an illusion, due in great measure to the slow development and retarded self-effectuation of people like us, educated in a sophisticating way and gifted with somewhat complex natures. I can only have faith and hope. . . .

No doubt, life, by blunting our sensibilities and reducing our demands upon the world, by degrading our expectations to *à peu près* of things, secures for us such happiness as is the best perhaps for mortals. Do not dwell on the thought that it is locked up in a grave. *It is not.* But learn to "live resolutely in the Whole, the Good, the

Beautiful." I believe very firmly that our end is to bring a solid almost world-repelling self into accord with this self-merging into the whole. It is just here that at a certain point in my life, Whitman in combination with Goethe, with side-lights of Marcus Aurelius, helped me so much. I am sure I got out of a great ditch about the year 1869 by communion with these three. The whole of Whitman, the marrow of Aurelius, and Goethe's above-quoted maxim, with his lines on *Eigenthum* and his Proëmium to "Gott und Welt" helped me amazingly —as men have been helped by the Gospels. Of course I do not mean that these are drugs which you can take with just the same benefit, because I know that every personality is different, with different needs, diseases and ways out. But the substance of what I say I adhere to. Self and God. I and the whole—the soul and the world —these must be by such of us accorded, and the accord is happiness.

I always enjoy the aroma of Antonio's remarks. Like so many Italian utterances, they have so much of ancient hereditary wisdom and sense of beauty, worked into the very stuff of simplest speech. They are like something in a dream.

I supped with Cator last night. A zither and a guitar-player—two men—came afterwards to make music for us. We had up the two Christians and Simeon, drank enormous quantities of old wine, sang, laughed, danced and made a most uproarious noise until 2 a.m. Then the two Christians and I descended on one toboggan in a dense snowstorm. It was quite dark and drifty beyond description. I sprained my left side in the groin a little; but I comfort myself with remembering that you did much the same without bad results. Did I tell you how, in meadow-sledging, I saw Miss Lindsay flung from her toboggan across the road to the

photographer's hut, over a mound of snow, with a drop of at least eight feet of wall on to the back of her head on the frozen post road? I fully expected to find her dead. She was only stunned, however.

97.—To H. F. B. *Davos, March* 12.

In your letter you asked what I meant by a "completed career." I cannot recall the context in which I wrote that phrase. But I suppose I alluded to my favourite doctrine, so often recently expressed, that a man must work his life out to the full by self-effectuation—that he will never attain to the completion of his proper sphere in existence without achieving self-consciousness, command of his internal resources, knowledge of his aims, by action and experience—audacity and trust.

What you say about Dipsychus wanting Mephisto after Mephisto's withdrawal, is not exactly an inversion of the situation. The situation itself is that Dipsychus is too timid to try anything by himself, too uncertain and shilly-shally. Mephisto is the spirit of audacity, which takes the form of cynicism when objectified and separated from the *nuances* of Dipsychus' varying moods.

98.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, March* 23.

I have read "Caterina" * and am sending her back to you. But I cannot say any profitable thing. I do not mean by this any complimentary thing, but I feel my inability to give you advice about alterations. I differ from Stevenson in this, that I believe a man must sink or swim by his own effort as a writer. If I thought it fair to Stevenson, which it is not, as he has too much

* An Essay on Caterina Cornaro.

to think about, I should have asked him to read the Essay and write to you. I feel you must make your venture—as we all have done, on your own responsibility. I do wish I could write with a heartier note of appreciation. I feel you must appeal to the public. This is always a venture. But both the hard knocks you may get and the sympathy you may evoke, will help you more than I can by any advice.

99.—To H. F. B. *Monte Generoso, May 22.*

We had a painfully hot journey to Milan in a crowded train with the brewing oppression of a thunderstorm that burst upon us when we got there. I spent the time in making plans for coming back to Venice. I have thought of nothing but Venice, Venice, since I left. The name rings in my soul.

Here all is quiet and humanity away. Before the sunset—in which Monte Rosa, Dom, Matterhorn, Monte Leone, Finsteraarhorn, with the burnished clouds, played their divine parts—I kept, to-night, asking myself, which of the two scenes, Venice or this, is made for us. But even here, before that sublimest piece of the supreme *Maestro*—sublimer than anything He does elsewhere perhaps in Europe—my heart ached for Venice—her poor and petty minarets and domes reared by man's squalid labour from the mud—yet full of man. I could not live there and survive.

100.—To H. F. B. *Monte Generoso, May 24.*

I have been writing Sonnets—eight, I think, two of which may do for poetry if not for publication.*

* The beginning of the "Stella Maris" sequence in "Vagabunduli Libellus."

The calm of the mountains begins to-day to work beneficially on me. It only begins, however. It is like going straight out of the C Minor into the Pastoral to come here from Venice.

I enclose a review of my poems sent me by an American admirer of my works. It is a gross piece of misconception of my merits. But it is also the first serious attempt to follow my drift and judge me sympathetically. I have never read an English review of my poems which did either.

101.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, July* 1.

You seem to be getting plenty of society in England. I wish I could so go about in London and see my friends, keeping always the best corner in my soul for Chimæraland! I am out of sorts always and somehow ill at ease. I have written three more Venetian sonnets. Two on the Jews' Cemetery. A third on the longing for Venice.

You must not forget to ask St. Loe * if he will undertake to go through some fifty sonnets in MS. and give me his opinion. Tell him the book will be called

Vago cuidam
Vagabunduli Libellum
Vagus Poeta
d. d.
Venetiis MDLXXXI

and therefore, though specially designed for you, will be dedicated to every Vagabond Soul. If Smith will let me, I should like not to put my name to it. Of course the translated sonnets (many taken from my other books) will betray the authorship. But I should like to keep it impersonal and vague in form at least.

You write to me of many things and admirable people. I have only my own solitude to write from.

* Mr. St. Loe Strachey, Symonds' nephew,

So you must excuse. There is a certain sadness for me in the thought that I have elected to live here, which you have overlived already and where no one seems entirely to live at ease. And yet I have elected—and my walls are rising—and I am not in my soul of souls dissatisfied.

P.S.—I send this to Sutton Court.* It was at Sutton Court one May morning I got news from Smith that he would publish my first book. And Catherine said (as your mother might say to you), "Aren't there too many books on Dante?"

P.P.S. *July* 4.—This letter ought to have gone off days ago. I am reading a life of Sarpi. The author says *Tutti i Veneziani sono eloquenti*, and gives reasons. Is not the remark true?

I think you are having a good time. That weird London! Its passions and vices and persuasions and fascinations have all of them, in my opinion, the terrific swing and hugeness of the place. What is an idyll in Italy is there a brutality or perhaps a tragedy.

I cannot recollect what I want to write. One odd sign of my present illness. I hear the treble of a phantom pianoforte being incessantly tuned. It comes between me and my wits; the shrill, shallow, watery sounds. Probably the effect of vast quantities of quinine on the aural nerves.

102.—To H. F. B. *Davos, July* 10.

When you get to London (if you mean to spend more time there) I think I shall ask you to help me in some genealogical enquiries. Either at Brit. Mus. or the Library of Apothecaries' Hall there will probably be found a book on Anatomy, published in Latin in 1717 by a collateral ancestor of mine, Joshua Symonds—a man who had a fine armorial book-plate I may have shown

* Sir Edward Strachey's, near Pensford, Bath.

you. He was a cultivated student and possessed books like Da Vinci on Painting. I want to know what sort of treatise it is; how he describes himself; and to whom he dedicates it; and, if it was published by subscription, who were the subscribers. If you tell me you can search for it, I will send exact title.

I have written a short history of the family of Symonds and also of the Norths. In comparing the two pedigrees, I observed the curious point which the enclosed draft will illustrate. It is only this: that the main line of my family, which had been settled at Almeshoe in Herts since the time of the Conquest, and which expired in the first years of the 15th Century, is now represented by the Norths and Spencers.

I have also by careful examination of our documents (*i.e.* such as I did not burn last year at Clifton) discovered what sacrifices my forefathers made to the Commonwealth and Puritan principles. They not only renounced their own chances as gentry (by taking to such professions, exclusive of trade, as rigid Nonconformists could follow); but they gave away lands to found Independent chapels and schools for the teaching of Presbyterian doctrine. Several fought as soldiers of Cromwell and Essex. At Naseby, two first cousins met in the opposed armies, for one at that time held the Commission of Captain for the King. I find another giving all his available money and all his plate to fortify Great Yarmouth for the Parliament. Another, again, went off with several of his children to New England, where he must have been among the earliest settlers. These things, all of which I knew before obscurely, when fully worked out, will throw a curious light upon the social break-up of a family of Squires. One considerable estate went out of the family at that epoch by the marriage of Elizabeth Symonds to John Hampden. But this

cannot be reckoned, except accidentally, among depressing influences: for few houses in England were so noble, few alliances so honourable, as that of Hampden.

See how genealogical I have been! I take a languid interest in these things, even though I am so seedy.

103.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, July* 31.

I have several letters—two at least from Sark—to thank you for. I am sorry to get at the same moment a letter from Smith, with a very decided opinion against your Essays, expressed in what he sometimes calls his blunt, but I should call his cutting style. I almost think I ought to send it to you, though I think it will give you pain.

In these circumstances I am inclined to advise one of two courses: (i) to go to Paul again and publish at the lowest figure of personal risk which he will fix: (ii) to put these Essays into a box and begin the life of Sarpi.

I am not sure whether I would not urge on you course No. i, though I know at your age and after the same repulse I should have chosen course No. ii. Indeed, when I shelved my book on the Elizabethan Drama, I did practically adopt it.

Yet I incline to advising you to get this book out—if you can do so through Paul without running the risk of more than £50. I believe it will emancipate you, and I do not agree with Smith—though I confess he is an excellent judge in literary matters. I am sorry you have these obstacles. But they are part of the literary life. I may remind you that both Macmillan and Longman refused my first book. This I only throw out to cheer you up for yet another push—and I was three years older when I tried to sell my lectures on Dante.

Oscar Wilde sent me a copy of his poems with "affectionate admiration," and a letter which seems a caricature of himself in *Punch*. I will keep it for you to see at some time. There are good things in the book, and he is a poet—undoubtedly, I think.

104.—H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Aug.* 11.

I have just returned from a little walking tour (of which more anon) and found your two lettters from Newhall. I do not wonder at the tone of sadness that runs through them—rather wonder that this should be so subdued and tranquil. For the renewal of the old impressions of your home, the mixed desire to be there and the sense that you are inwardly growing away from it, combined with the disappointment about your book—all this must be exceedingly trying to you. Such phases in life do not leave you just as they found you, but force on that slowly-driving, ever-accumulating glacier of ἀνάγκη which seems beyond control of the will or blandishment of liking. About your book: you must not be discouraged by so slight a failure. I am just reading Landor's life. After years before the public, he tried innumerable publishers, says Colvin, before he found one to take his quite imperishable "Imaginary Conversations"; and even then the man insisted on cutting out and toning down to suit an imaginary public. Whatever becomes of it I want you to turn with the immortal youth of love to literature again. Do not think too much of actual achievement. Our race, like that of the believer, must be run by casting behind us things of the past and pressing forward to the things to come.

Our little tour was this. On Monday, we (a family party) walked with Ardüser over the Mayenfelder Furka, a wild pass, over 8000 ft., to Arosa and slept there. On

Tuesday walked down the Arosa Valley to Langweis and back. Yesterday crossed the Altein pass from Arosa (about 9000 ft.) to Wiesen and slept there; and to-day came back by carriage. It was very pleasant, and the scenery of Arosa is really superb—something like the head of the valley you are now in (Val d'Hérens)—woods, streams, and alps combined with the most tremendous crags. Also the view from the Altein over the range of Piz Aela and Piz Keseh, with Albula, Julier and Splügen mountains desolately grand in a most impressive way. We were rather troubled with weather: fierce heat broken by thunderstorms. All yesterday we trod those pathless hills in rolling mists of thunder, indescribably splendid and menacing and tragic. Ardüser was very nice. We slept each night in little wooden houses. My bad lung is rather overdone with so much climbing, and my soul is not satisfied with herself. If only we could be as good and as calm as Nature: but this seems impossible. There are things too deep in their unutterable sadness, too keen in their condemnation of our own inadequacy to God's infinite goodness.

105.—To H. S. *Davos Platz, Aug.* 12.

You took in a very kindly spirit my atrabilious remarks on Trevelyan's "Fox," and expressed your own divergence in an urbanely indirect way. The fact is I was intensely interested in his book, and felt how much there was to learn from his masterly treatment of the subject. The only point of ultimate disagreement between us would be about certain obvious elements of style. People will always differ about Macaulay as a model. And Trevelyan appears to me to have outdone Macaulay in effort and unrest. But this is all. And how

stupid it would be to insist on this in face of so much amusement given, and knowledge easily communicated, and vigour brilliantly displayed!

Colvin's "Landor" is, I think, a real success. The writing is excellent. He makes Landor interesting. But he does not persuade me about the supreme importance of the prose-works. Indeed the very passages he quotes seem to justify the comparative neglect under which they lie. I do not know Landor's poetry well enough to take up the cudgels, though you are right in saying I should not agree with Colvin's estimate of his verse. The "Hellenics" have been favourites of mine ever since my father used to read the "Hamadryad" and "Iphigenia" to me when I was a boy. I well remember crying convulsively over the climax of both those poems—moved by the intensity of suggested beauty and the almost superhuman emotion—as it were of a superior region of passion into which the poet had transported me, opening vistas of a better and a more immense, beyond the scope of my imagination. The dilation of the individual by some potent work of dignified, serene, and yet intensely felt art is a quite incalculable effect; and to explain why Landor's Marmoreal Muse should possess the charm, would require a very patient process of analysis.

I am much better. We walked over Mayenfelder Furka to Arosa and back by Altein Joch to Wiesen—4 days out and back: high passes; some 8000 ft. and 9000 ft. each. I am not in any essential point too tired. But am glad to rest now. The roof is being put upon my house!

106.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Sept.* 1.

To-day brought me Monday's letter from Menaggio and the packet of sonnets. Their arrival made me turn

to your list. I have not yet made a comparative analysis by the light of St. Loe's. But what I see from yours already discourages the idea of publishing even 50. It is quite necessary to omit those you mark for omission. But this leaves so maimed a series, and so unrepresentative, that perhaps it will be best to consign the lot to the box whither so much of my best work has gone. Or else to wait till I have produced another hundred out of which a few may be culled. More sanguine moods may bring other resolutions. At present I am noways sanguine, it is only the weather, I think, and some bothers about my house. I am going to have the furniture made here or in the Engadine—of the simplest kind, and only *τὰ ἀναγκαιότατα*. My book-room is to be panelled and book-cased with white pine, picked out in larch. My own bedroom I mean to panel, walls and roof, with Cembra. The dining-room to be done likewise, after the plan of C.'s, in Cembra.

I hear from Stevenson now and then. Did I tell you he has taken the Tschuggen Châlet for next winter? I do not greatly like "Virginibus Puerisque" in spite of its brilliancy. It is always to me a little forced and flashy.

107.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Sept.* 17.

I had an interesting but very exhausting time with Jowett. He is a wonderful old man—very comradely, serene and cheerful—one of the wisest men I ever knew, and one of the tenderest, yet lacking something which I think his early breeding in a narrow household and his want of domestic happiness in later life, perhaps, too, his freedom from trials of the emotions, have produced. (It is false to talk of things producing a defect; but this slight defect in him seems positive.) Jowett has a noble and gentle soul.

I have had several reviews of my book. One in the *Athenæum* gave me real pleasure, by the knowledge displayed and by the tone of critical yet respectful evaluation adopted by the writer. This review is anything but mere praise.

108.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Sept.* 24.

I begin a letter, which I may finish to-morrow. The rooms you have taken for me at Barbier's * are just the sort I want. I hope I may come to occupy them. Just now I have got an infamous cold. It is the sequel of my going away with Jowett, I suppose.

Great thoughts are stirring in my mind about my future work. And I cannot stay cooped up here to contemplate the future, if it is at all possible for me to fly forth into freedom for a while. Poetry I have abandoned many days, but have made some progress with my pedigrees. I am beginning to tire of them. The labour seems infinite, and it has no *Geist.*

I wish I could have seen your shows and illuminations. If it had not been for Jowett coming when he did and taking me back with him toward England, I should probably have been in Venice. But one cannot cut the cloth of friendship just according to desire, and it was very friendly of him to come from Oxford to see us; and I got good.

109.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Oct.* 29.

Thank you greatly for your first letter since I left you. It is true what you say, that letters are a poor substitute for speech and presence. Yet they may be made to do almost as much, partly by their reticences. Anyhow yours comforts me. I cannot understand how I communicate growth and life when all seems chaos and decay

* San Vio, Venice.

within me. That I do communicate some kind of energy I can believe. But I take the word you send with trust: I need to trust it lest I fall into despair of some sort.

I envy you that glory of sunset you saw the day I left. It was discreetly beautiful at Milan. But Milan is a poor affair, with its fog, after Venice, where when the sky is once clear, all heaven is always luminous and pure.

Mr. and Mrs. Courthope arrived yesterday. They are coming on to Venice for a week. I think I shall give them your address. Courthope is editing the works of Pope on a grand scale. He has brought me out his last volume. I think he means to review me in the *Quarterly*. He is a man you will like. A little younger than myself, he has kept his youthfulness of mind and spirit in a wonderful way, and is still quite boyish. A rigid Tory. Also one of the twenty nobles, of England, you may remember. The Courthopes want to take some rooms at Casa Barbier for a week from Monday. They don't want many—would pay 5 frcs. a day.

110.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov.* 1.

The pleasantest thing which has happened to me since I left Venice was opening my *P.M.G.* this morning and seeing your "Burano." I never doubted that Morley would print one at least of those papers. Yet the sight of it so soon in print gave me most unfeigned pleasure. I hope J. M. will print all three we sent, and that you will go on till you have collected a bookful of these sketches, taking very various sides of Venetian life and landscape.

I heard last night from Stephen that he is delighted with the "Gondolier's Wedding." He prints in this

month's *Cornhill* my Jews' Cemetery Sonnets. Between us we are working Venice pretty hard.

I have had two letters about Santa Chiara at Montefalco. She was a real woman—an Augustinian nun, who died quite young, about twenty years after the death of the other Clara.

Stephen says my "May in Umbria" has had a great success. It is odd: for I agreed with the critic who said I had produced a blurr of atmosphere with a few hazy outlines hardly visible. And agreeing with him, I dashed off the very decided flesh and blood picture of the Gondolier's party.

I did not hope to write to you so soon in such good spirits. But I cannot resist the sympathy of gladness.

At Chiavenna I wrote a great many sonnets. The poem is assuming formidably large proportions, and is taking the shape (though straggling) of a Trilogy. Part i. *Chimæra.* Part ii. The sea calls. Part iii.—no title possible as yet.

Of course this writing of sonnets is so much waste. The whole *tema* is beyond the scope of publication. But I must deliver my burden to the end and then abandon the whole business. Meanwhile I have quite shelved "Vagabunduli Libellus." I talked about it to Stevenson, who fell in love with the title, but who clearly does not believe I can write sonnets. If I don't take care, he will bag my title. I have also fallen into a ditch with Mr. Hall Caine, who is publishing a volume of original sonnets by living authors, and has chosen a ghastly three of mine. Put together, they are horribly morbid. I fear it is too late to alter.

The Stevensons are in the châlet. He looks very ill; and Ruedi tells me his disease has advanced since last winter. Somehow, I am not hopeful about him. He does not seem to me to have the sort of toughness or

instinctive energy of self-control, the faculty which I possess, of lying still when I feel my centre of vitality attacked. He asked warmly after you. I shall show him "Burano" and see what he says. He and Mrs. S. are compiling a joint book of Ghost-stories.

111.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov. 2.*

You do not seem yet to know that your Ghost-story was in the *P.M.G.* for the 26th. Perhaps the first news of the publication of these things will be in the form of a cheque. If you want copies, I will send you mine. I gave them to Stevenson to-day. He was lying, ghastly, in bed—purple cheek-bones, yellow cheeks, bloodless lips —fever all over him—without appetite—and all about him so utterly forlorn. "Woggs" squealing. Mrs. Stevenson doing her best to make things comfortable.

Tennyson has written a dismal squalid poem called "Despair," about an atheist's suicide, in the *XIXth Century*. It is a scrannel sort of thing, which of course everybody says is tremendously powerful. I do not think so. Funny: his imagination, like mine, has been taken by the fact recorded by Sir John Lubbock of the *dead suns*. What an age it is! *Gran Dio*, what an age! I almost feel as though I must write myself out, after your suggestion. I am sanguine, if nothing better. And we do need now the reaction of the spirit against all that chokes and cribs us round.

112.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov. 7.*

I am pleased that you have at last heard the news about the *P.M.G.* and got some money. I regard this as a very decided piece of good fortune, because I somehow have always believed that in literature the great thing is to make the first step.

If I can get back from Stevenson "Burano" and the "Ghost-story," I will send all three, for I have "Malamocco." But I despair of anything in that house. Probably, in spite of my request to keep the newspapers, they have already burned them. You must make a book of these Venetian Vignettes. About thirty will do it. I am going to arrange and send those of your old letters which I think may be of use. Or would you rather have them when you come up here? Tell me. For myself, I find that I can work up old material better at a distance from the place. The difficulty with you, I think, was that you would not do diurnal things. But a man must do these first, and serve the world he means at some time, in his measure, to command.

113.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov.* 10.

Yours of 6th and 7th just come. I return Morley's. Of course it is nice. In every way getting into literature is a matter of touching the spring which suddenly opens the box—of finding out how to say "Sesame!" Take heed now to be *yourself*. Do not get known as *scuola di* anybody.

I finished last night a long article called "A Cinquecento Brutus." It is the history of Lorenzino de' Medici —his murder of Alessandro—and his murder by Bibboni. To-day I have begun a short paper in a new style called "Cherubino at the Scala."

It is an odd fascinating world, this of friends and literature. The outside public seems tame after it.

Stevenson is better. He is certainly not going to die yet. But I do not like his habit as an invalid. One thing is in his favour—his serenity of soul about what is called comfort. But the *défaut de cette qualité* is that he is, as a Bohemian, ever restless in mind,

114.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov.* 13.

I send you my last crop of sonnets, to ask which of these you think might be put into "Vagabunduli Libellus." I do not suppose I have ever expressed my deepest self so nakedly before as I have here. The question is whether they are not too naked. If I were to print the previous series on Self and the series on the Sacro Monte, it would make a strange *catena.*

We have the loveliest summer weather. I sit out and bask when I do not write. And I walk at night. I only regret sometimes that I had not had some of this at Venice. I could have written as well in frost and snow here and taken my walks abroad. But it does not do to be discontented.

Stevenson is better. But he lost blood a few nights since. He is very nice. I got to like him more. Perhaps because I am less masterful than last year.

115.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov.* 18.

I literally toiled nine hours at the desk yesterday, producing the most hide-bound critique of Rossetti, and then I went to bed hag-driven with my labour.

Catherine and Janet have arrived. My room is all over-flown now with the most stupendous chrysanthemums from Covent Garden. These flowers have ever had for me a most peculiar attraction, coming as they do in the deadest season of the year—so pure themselves, so pungent without any perfume, so coloured, and so exquisite in form.

Addio. I am writing in a hurly-burly of chrysanthemums and Miss North's sketches of elephants and huge silver girdles and London hats and gorgeous ties (for me) and gold chains and watches for Janet and all the

miscellaneous lumber brought by superfluous wealth into Davos.

116.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Dec.* 3.

After my book is made up, I do not mean to go in much for what R. L. S. calls "the weariful trade of the word-painter." I really always wonder why the public stands as much of it as it now gets. The development of the trade since I first took to it (with "Orvieto" in 1864) has been astounding. I had it pretty much to myself then, and was rather ashamed of it. There has come an answer from Smith, on board the yacht *Isa* at Malta, about "Vagabunduli Libellus." He will print it. I have sent a specimen sonnet up to London, to be put in type.

Meanwhile I have talked with Stevenson about the book. He hardly disguises his opinion that I cannot write poetry at all, and am a duffer at prose. But having said this, he has no interest in the affair. Whether or not I have what is worth saying to say in verse, is utterly beyond his scope—not the scope of his intellect, but of his being. In other and simpler words, he does not know one red cent of me—as he would say—and hardly anybody does. So I have nothing to go upon in this extremity but myself.

I am just talking weariedly to you—not writing a letter. Don't imagine that! I am smoking after lunch and letting out.

I wish to goodness we were all like Stevenson! To be reasonably and justly self-satisfied about one's style, to take life smoothly, and have a cheerful conscience! oh, what bliss!

Well, my cigar, a good cigar, is out. I stop talking.

117.—To H. F. B. *Thusis, Feb.* 1.

Christian and I are on our way home from our Valtelline journey. I think I wrote to you from Samaden. Ever since then we have had most glorious weather and many remarkable experiences, of which I shall not tell you now much because it is probable that I shall write them out when I get home and print them. I will only say it has been one of the most Bacchic journeys a man could imagine. The passes of Bernina and Splügen have seemed literally to stream with wine—all the wine of Valtelline pouring itself out over the mountains. What the scenes were like upon those snowy ledges I must leave to the fancy. They were quite indescribable. But I must endeavour, if I write them out, to catch some little spark of their wild spirit.

Now one goes back to cares—for I shall find letters and have to attend to business. One of the mainstays of my new house has failed me. The *chef*, who had engaged himself to me (but not in writing), has taken a place at the Via Mala, Thusis. They have also translated my *P.M.G.* letter on Davos into German and printed it in the *Freier Rhätier*. It is making a horrible sensation.

P.S.—Your coat has been my comfort all through this journey, which, seeing that it embraced Fluela, Bernina and Splügen, has been a pretty trying one for the merits of a warm coat.

118.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Feb.* 6.

I have found myself in such a mass of affairs since I returned that I have had no time or inclination to write. I got both your Turin and two Venice letters, and thank you much. I also hope that next time we shall be really

more together and have diviner converse. Somehow, all things this winter have quite got off their old rails. Yet the weather goes on as wonderful as when you were here.

I am in horrible hot water about my *P.M.G.* letter. It has appeared in the *Freier Rhätier*, *Le Temps*, and the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. Everybody here is furious, and my dear Davosers look angrily at me. Only Christian Buol takes it quite sweetly. As we drove up from Hoffnungsau in a post sledge, the conductor got up behind and began swearing at the writer of the article, not knowing it was I. Christian firmly defended me on every point. No gentleman of the finest water could have acted better.

One upshot of the matter has been a project to start a company to work Wiesen, and I am literally in communication with Holsboer about it. I marched boldly at him, though I knew he was seeking how to bring an action for libel against me. I had to bully him a little, and then we got on business. Whether anything will come of this I cannot say.

Meanwhile I have the proofs of ninety-six sonnets. When they are all here I shall send you the lot. They are a very extraordinary collection, I think, now that I see them in sequence. I don't know what it is, whether it is because I made them, but I find a new tone in them separate from that of other sonnets. This makes it impossible for me to judge of the effect they may produce.

I agree with what you say about Wilde, especially about the things you like. Only you don't mention what I think one of the best—γλυκύπικρος ἐρῶς. They are working away in my house, and it is beginning to look quite habitable with its rough floor. I get to like it more and more.

Hall Caine's book of sonnets is out: a handsome book; but the new sonnets in it rather disappoint me.

I lead a sinful life apart from all spiritual or intellectual things. And yet it is borne in upon me now that these sonnets have been an adequate effort even for one whole year. Considering the small effect they are likely to produce, this is perhaps sad. Anyhow, I cannot just now take any interest in literary work.

119.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Feb.* 8.

I thank you for your letter with the scraps of Venice and Alcuin blended. Both are charming. I believe, however, that that old Latin takes one in.

I go on here in rather a lamentable way. I have to write so many letters and face so much that is nasty about this Davos affair. The deuce seems in it—*absit omen*—but I had no notion what a floodgate of botheration would be let loose by my *P.M.G.* article. It is quite fantastic to be paid, as I was last night, £2 for it.

The sonnets, as I told you, are getting into print. I hope soon to send you the whole packet. I may be deceived. But they seem to me, read altogether, to be inebriating. The point of course is that I know them perfectly well and understand their swing.

120.—To H. F. B. *St. Moritz, Feb.* 21.

We are still here, but shall soon be returning to Davos. It has done Janet good, I think, and she has enjoyed herself skating with the accomplished Engadiners on their lovely Rink. That is really one of the prettiest things I ever saw: a sheet of ice lifted up above the valley, with all the mountains round it, suspended like a hanging garden in the sunshine.

A great deal of malicious nonsense has been talked about this climate. In many respects it seems to me better than that of Davos. Certainly it is just now: for lying so much higher and in a keener air, the snow has not yet begun to melt, and all the roads are open with a good sledging path.

I almost wish I had studied the Engadine in winter before I built my house at Davos. It might have suited my wife better, and I should have been nearer Italy. But it is better not to dwell on these things. The worst of being a nomad is that one wavers in one's wishes about a residence.

It will be some time still before I send you the Sonnets. A hundred and sixty-one have been printed, and I have the proofs to get of some twelve more. I shall then send them all back together to Spottiswoode for the revise. This I will send you. And then will come the final decision as to omissions, etc. I wrote extravagantly to you the other day about the things. Certainly they do seem to me remarkable, but they have not the cohesion and organic force of a poem. If I could have wedged the complete Venetian series into the middle, and have allowed the metaphysical series to follow, then I believe the book would have been what for a moment I thought it. But it will now remain fragmentary, imperfect and obscure.

I do not seem able to polish the series "Sacro Monte" and "Mystery of Mysteries." When I try to do so, I lose something of directness and energy. Yet they are very rough.

It is pleasant to be occupied with verse from time to time, in the midst of the desolating petty warfare I have got into. The local newspapers here discharge daily at me tirades of wrath, perplexity and spite. I have taken the line of holding my tongue, neither rebutting their

false statements, nor apologizing for what I regard as wrong in my original article.

121.—To H. F. B. [*Davos*], *March* 4.

I send you by this post the MS. of a preface to my "Vagabunduli Libellus." You can see from it that I have thought of dividing the sonnets into sections with separate titles. I wonder what you will think about the admonition I have given to my readers not to seek a biographical story; also how do you approve of the concluding paragraphs, where I raise the question of the dialectical sonnet?

I think of having it bound in black and stamped with this device. The shield being gold with the trefoils coming out in black. The motto and lines of the band in gold, the band itself kept black.

Trefoils have a mystic meaning in heraldry; and here pass well for the Good, the Beautiful, the Whole—the Faith, Hope, Charity, of which I have written much in my sonnets.

The making and printing of this book have put me off all other work. Yet I have managed this year to collect another volume of Italian sketches, which are all written but one on Urbino and another on my Valtelline journey.

The Stevensons still go on in a very wretched way. He says they have not been out of the house since the first of January. He tells me the same stories about George IV.

122.—To H. F. B. *Davos, March* 5.

I suppose you are off.* And I hope you are. For I trust that with your old salt, Pietro, and Antonio to boot, the seas will not gulf you down—even though *Auster, dux inquieti turbidus Hadriæ,* be blowing. I have had a great surprise to-day in the glad appreciation which Stevenson and his wife have given my sonnets. I sent them up the whole lot yesterday in proof. They are enthusiastic about the dialectical ones. Stevenson wants me to make a volume of about eighty-five, omitting all the Davos ones, "Juvenilia," "The Sea Calls" and the Venetian Series; retaining all the ethical and metaphysical; and altering the title. I believe he has suggested the way for producing a *book.* He says it will be both remarkable and interesting. This comes to me as a relief, I confess, from grinding misery—the misery of this dreadful Davos business, which goes serpenting along in the public press.

123.—To H. F. B. *St. Gallen, March* 21.

I hope you got the proofs of the Sonnets. I am going to call the book now *Animi Figura* and print only ninety-three of those, adding the psychological sonnets of my other books. Will you accept this dedication? If you would rather not, let me hear.

Horum
Unico Canticulorum Genitori
H. R. F. B.
Animulæ Figuram
Meliorum Dis Volentibus Versiculorum
Libamentum
Amicus Poeta
Davosiis Propinat. MDCCCLXXXII.

* On a journey to Istria in a "trabaccolo."

124.—To H. F. B. [*Davos*], *March* 31.

I have received from you news of your dismal and I fear costly journey.* I am so sorry for you, except that these contrasts, if we have health enough, stir us up.

Poor Green.† It is dreadfully sad. So many of us might have so easily been taken — myself, Clifford, Stevenson, Bradley, you—without the world feeling the same hole in it. And yet here we are all left with our several fatuities, disabilities, maladjustments, ennuis and other absurdities, that make us bores to ourselves and useless to the universe. I am wanting to get away, if possible to get to Venice.

125.—To H. F. B. *Davos, April* 17.

My house goes forward fairly fast, and looks really very nice. All the nice work, panelling, etc., is being done now. And I have just bought enough Valtelline to drown a dozen Davosers. But these affairs have also their drawbacks. The roof lets in the snow. And every day I have to muddle hours away in orders and calculations.

Ruedi says Stevenson is much better for the winter here. His wife is very ill again. They leave soon: never to return, I suppose. They want to settle in Normandy.

126.—To H. F. B. *Davos, April* 23.

I have been writing (and have finished) all this week articles on Machiavelli and the three Aldi Manutii for *Encycl. Brit.* This job has taken up my time and used

* To Scotland.

† T. H. Green, Symonds' brother-in-law, died in March, 1882. See "Biography," p. 368.

my pen. There has been a great fire in the woods here in Sertig, started, it is believed, by a pipe. I walked 1500 feet uphill over hot ashes to-day, right up to the Alps, where the fire had sent its forked tongues into the dry heath. Fortunately it is now quelled. But Platz and Dörfli and Glarus worked for twenty-four hours incessantly to stop it, and the church bells rang their fire-alarms. The snow, as far as we could see to leeward, was embrowned with the heavy shadow of the smoke.

In a week about I hope to start for England.

The Stevensons have evanished. She was again ill, and he worn.

127.—To H. F. B. *Zimmerwald, Bern, May 7.*

I am going to Basel to-morrow, with the intention of starting next day for Paris.

We are all together here in a little Pension among orchards, woods and meadows, with a fine view of the Bernese Oberland and part of the lake of Thun.

In London my address will be the Athenæum Club, Pall Mall.

I take this journey with a very heavy heart. Yet I hardly know why. Probably I am ill, as I wrote to you. When the eyes and the brain are both disturbed, there is no happiness. But independently of this, my life seems to have become suddenly hollow, and I do not know what is hanging over me. I cannot even put the shadow that has fallen on me into words. At least into written words. I would give a great deal for a friend's voice.

128.—To H. F. B. *Athenæum Club, May 14.*

I found two of your letters, one from Venice and one from Perugia, when I got to London last night. Do not

be uneasy about me. The change of scene which I have had already, has done me good, though, being greatly below par in strength and spirits, I am more a passive spectator than enjoyer of what I see around me. The eyes in particular a great torment.

On of the first things I did on reaching this Club, was to get a *Macmillan* and read your "In Memoriam" * stanzas. I congratulate you on them. I will preserve your incognito, except from my sister, if, when I see her, I find she has read and noticed the poem.

I have got Christian with me. We stayed three days in Paris, where I worked for three hours every morning at the Salon, and have now a pretty fair conception of the present state of French art. One evening I went to hear "Boccace," principally out of the memory of its tunes on Venetian lips. It is very light and gay. But picture-seeing and play-going lose their attractions when the eyes are as sore as mine. Perhaps the critical sense is sharpened by the veil of pain thrown over the perception. I almost think it may be. If I can get at all comfortably settled, I shall stay in London now for perhaps a fortnight. At present I can hardly say I have a roof over my head. All the good hotels are crammed. They left my luggage behind at Dover, too, yesterday.

129.—To H. F. B. *Athenæum Club, May* 24.

Though I have often heard from you, I have really had no time to write. I get dreadfully used up in this mixed life, and I always have a lot of nasty notes to work off. But I seem to have accumulated much to tell you, which when I try it by an intellectual touch-stone, turns to dust. I was at Oxford from Wednesday till Monday : the place beautiful ; Jowett rather trying ; my

* "In Memoriam T. H. G."

sister ill and broken down in nerves; many friends about; altogether full days from 8 a.m. till midnight. I believe Warren will bring a reading party to the Seehorn Inn upon the Davos Lake this autumn. I have made arrangements about Green's MSS. with Nettleship and Bradley. I made acquaintance with your friend Lodge (Sir Richard), and liked him; enjoyed the echo of Venice which came from him to me. I believe that mere physical fatigue in this most fatiguing of cities has done me good, by decentralizing my maladies and making me feel anxious about my lungs again. It is a hole of a place after all is said and done; and I don't care two cents for it—not being powerful enough to enjoy myself in my own covetous fashion, and being far too world-worn to care for cheap or diluted amusements. The pictures are hardly worth seeing—worse, I think, than the salon. There is not a scrap of the *Idee* in the whole of this huge machine-work. All is of the nature of *genre* and studio-nudity, except Alma Tadema whom we know well, Munckacksy, who has done a clever "Christ before Pilate," a young man, Julian Story, with a very clever "Deposition," and our old friend B. Jones, who is just as usual. Poynter seems to be used up. The truth is that Portraits are killing Art; and what remains unkilled by Portraits has no mythology to express.

I wonder whither the Spirit is driving you and me? Your last letter and my own conscience make me ask this. I seem to myself to have lost so much of all the common interests which go to make up human life: to have become so cold and critical and impassive: and yet to have preserved a core of youth both passionate and fervid.

Meanwhile there is always literature for a go-cart. "Animi Figura" will be out in a week, Smith says. I will send you a copy. I am printing my "Venetian Medley"

in a mutilated form for *Fraser*, and shall have another on Urbino to print. These will complete a book of "Italian Bye-ways."

One of the painful things at Oxford was the extraordinary shrillness of divergence in opinion upon all matters of life and duty between Green's ideal and that to which my own experience has led me. He did not believe in a personal immortality, it appears. Somehow or another, this fact makes the confusion of our present life look to me more ghastly. Yet what is any standard, if we are all to go into the hotchpotch of the Eternal Thought? The absence of definite dogma accentuates, I think, our present differences, and makes the isolation of souls more painful.

Warren and my sister knew the authorship of your verses. This is how your anonymity has not been kept. But why should it be kept? She told me Grove had said he was sure it was a good poem, but he wanted to know if it was correct as a piece of character drawing.

I have given myself a couple of hours' rest in the smoking-room here, and this is how I come to scribble so long a letter. I almost think I am the youngest man in the Club! It is full of ossified Celebrities. While I was hanging up my coat just now, a man leant over me to do the same—bald and grey-bearded—in whom I recognized a friend whose every word, at one time, was electric—and who has now forgotten the sight of me, or possibly has lost the keenness of his eye. It is a strange world. I suppose I shall not hear much music. It is difficult to edge that in among dinner-parties and permanent collapse.

Leopardi is pretty much in the right. But I do not think you or I can judge him. For you will have noticed that Leopardi had no permanent mood of passion; and what we should be without the love of the

impossible, we do not know. *That*, I am sure, determines my spiritual being in its strength and weakness. If we can use it for a motive force, then we have overcome the world. If it gets the mastery, we shall go mad or become in some incalculable way played out. I have come to the end of my time almost; otherwise I should go on maundering on like this for ever, writing on my knees with a pipe in my mouth.

130.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, July* 9.

I am always delighted to get a letter from you, and to hear what you are working at—even if I do not respond about your studies. I look forward much to what you will tell me about Leopardi. I do not know him well enough—have indeed shrunk from the powerful influence of his despair.

My life drags on on a broken wing,* much hindered by small worries. The house breeds these. I have just got Swinburne's new poems, which I mean to review. "Tristram and Iseult" is a remarkable production, but it is not interesting, and Italian renders one touchy about such profluent verbiage.

I am making a great effort to emerge from dejection and lassitude. It requires a grim exercise of will. But patience and serenity I must summon to my aid, remembering how many good things I have had in life in spite of every drawback.

131.—To H. F. B. [*Davos*], *Aug.* 24.

You must have had a splendid day over the Splügen yesterday. I wonder whether this has been so dismal on the Lake of Como as it has been here. It opened

* Symonds had received a bad report of his health from two London doctors. See "Biography," p. 370.

with fog, and has gone on raining incessantly. Jowett has been wanting to be talked to all the time. He does not seem to feel fatigue in this exercise. He goads me about work. I talked to him a good bit about the possibility and the propriety of associating you in the Italian History. He strongly urges me to put it well before you. But I see great difficulties in the scheme. Two men cannot (at least you and I cannot) write, arrange material, give form in common. I do not believe we should differ about main points. If I failed to convince you on any topic, you would certainly have convinced me.

26th.

Jowett, who was to have left us to-day, has caught a bad cold, and stays till Monday. I get along as well as I can. I have begun to read Romanin. He does not seem to me a first-rate critic of history. There are very shaky bits in his account of the earliest Venetians. But I suppose he begins to be really good when he arrives at solid materials for history.

132.—To H. F. B. [*Davos*], *Aug.* 27.

This morning I feel it was presumptuous to write so much as I did yesterday about great literary undertakings. I had a terrible night of illness which made me feel my frailty. And yet it is well to have written it all. It may lead to something if you think it well over. Jowett is almost putting an end to me. He is very cross with his cold, poor old man, and more deaf than usual. The weather prevents our getting out. He comes and insists on being talked to for three hours at a stretch. At the end of the day I can scarcely bear to move my chest, it is so sore with constant effort. All

the same Jowett is a good old creature. He read my "Animi Figura," he says. He says he understands my writing it, but that it is very sad.

133.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Sept.* 18.

This is the sixth day of incessant downpour, rain and snow combined. I have not been outside the house except just now and then to rush over to my own house. You can fancy how melancholy this has made us all.

The dismantling of our rooms here is taking place spasmodically; pictures, MSS., etc., being carried over to the house. Whenever a fine day comes, I must have my books transferred. I received the MSS. of Vittoria (Accoramboni) quite safely. They contain a good deal which Gnoli had not told me. The MS. account of Lodovico's execution is especially valuable. He was buried in the Madonna dell'Orto. As that church has been "restored," his tomb is probably non-extant now. If you ever light on Gnoli's book, read the *Relazione* of the *bravo* who murdered Troilo Orsini (first Duchess of Bracciano's paramour) in Paris. It is a piece of the same stamp exactly as Bibboni's narrative.

I had a long talk yesterday with St. Loe about your proposed book of poems. The upshot of it was that I think he is disinclined (much against his will) to publish, on account of his barrister's career. There is no doubt that a young barrister had better not acquire a reputation for light literature. Journalism does not signify. But poems are always held a sign of weakness.

134.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Oct.* 7.

Your thrilling letter about the floods, the Balbi household, and the drive to Dolo, has given me rare pleasure. I understand and feel the whole of it. I have room now

to take care of such things; and when you ever seek me here again, I trust you will find a pigeon-hole full of your writings, under lock and key, with a separate division of my cupboard to yourself.

I am pleased in all ways, except one minor matter of the building, with our house. It is pleasant indeed to live in. My wine is excellent; and of M. Bérard, the *chef*, I leave St. Loe to sing the praises. Truly I feel better now, and hope to do some work soon. My present scheme is a book of Elizabethan studies. Whether it will come off, is of course doubtful.

I am rather excited to-night. My wife has come from the lower lands with blossoms of Pomegranate and Dahlia and Amaryllis and Heliotrope. It is just too much for me. We have had such a dreadful summer and autumn—and my life has grown so grey and short—I cannot bear it. I think of a pomegranate flower—*ἄκρον ἐπ' ἀκροτάτῳ*—upon the canal side at Torcello.

Poor Bunny! * I had been saying that his sketches of Venice are better than Turner's, to St. Loe. Can these be bought now? Send me Rocchi's of the Salute. I trust you that it is good. And I want a tiny piece for my panels.

Villari is quite wrong about Machiavelli's morality. It is quite indefensible. Villari's attitude reveals not so much the Italian temperament as the second-rate thinker. St. Loe has been well here. He has spirited me up to the Elizabethan business.

135.—To H. F. B. *Am Hof, Davos Platz, Oct.* 10.

In the letter I got from you to-night you say you wonder what my house is called. This is the name. It means: "on" or "by the farm"—the old name of the

* Painter, and friend of Ruskin, for whom he worked.

spot of ground, which in Davos dialect should, by the way, more properly be "Uf'm Hof."

It is curious that you should write about cold weather at Venice. We have had the first summer days of the whole year during the last week.

In my last letter I asked you if Bunny's sketches were going to be sold. I should so very much like to have one or two of the good ones—I mean the dreamy effects with San Giorgio above the mist, and some of the sunsets. Tell me more about his wife's circumstances. It sounds very sad. I suppose the children are almost Italian. St. Loe left me yesterday, and I miss him naturally. He has poked up the old fire of the Elizabethan Dramatists in me. But as yet the fire only smokes.

I have to-night from London a curious book—Barnfield's poems. They are eclogues in *sesta rima* and sonnets about a boy whom he calls Ganymede. Arber has just beautifully reprinted them. There is something decidedly curious in these poems, which are intimately though obscurely linked to Shakspere's minor lyrics.

I shall be sure to be pleased with the ducat. Mrs. Clark's *osella* * (if it was an *osella*) was as large as a five-franc piece, set in an old filigree of a pretty double basket pattern.

Last year I was with you in mid-Venetian pleasures. It is just as well I did not count on coming this year. The floods would have bothered and saddened me. How is the *vino nuovo* this year?

136.—To H. F. B. *Am Hof, Oct.* 13.

What dreadful weather you have! We do not notice it. To us it now seems natural—after four days' tolerable

* Venetian medals struck by the Doges and distributed to the Patricians at Christmastide.

warmth to see the snow and rain falling like mad. There is much sickness here. Typhoid has broken out in Platz, and the old women say to Mrs. White, "Mr. Symonds will feel he was not far wrong when he wrote last winter."

I received yesterday Caine's "Recollections of Rossetti"—chiefly letters to him from Rossetti. The book is curious. Letters of an undoubted man of genius, chloralized, confined to his studio and the cage of his intolerable self. Rossetti says good things, but colourlessly, hollowly. Life does not seem to pant in him. How odd this is, when he was such an artist! Two of his big ballads written but a few months ere his death.

I am looking over the MSS. of my work on the Elizabethan Drama, left unfinished in rage, fury, love, depression, illness in 1866. It seems to me really remarkable that I should have abandoned it. And yet I doubtless took right measure of myself; I would not be ambitious then, if my own soul judged me lower in faculty than the height of that soul's expectation. It was prompted by romantic feeling that I wrote on the Greek Poets, and whistled my soul's self-scorn to the winds—love having lent those frail things wings to fly by. But the "Elizabethan Studies" inflated by no love, sank to the bottom of the Dead Sea of my pride. That is the truth. I sneered at their half-accomplishment. My wish is now to resume them and repiece them. Age has deadened pride in me.

We are comfortable in our house. The one serious thing I complain of is that the floors of the two upper storeys shake, owing to the amount of wood used in the construction. The architect's obstinacy, when I was building, overcame my strong instinct in favour of solid stone partition-walls. It is indeed a real drawback, and

one which how very small an extra expense would have obviated! However, even about that I am not sure. The Swiss are very odd people. Some of their work is done most conscientiously, especially the ornamental wood-work. Some of it, and that the most essential, like laying down of floors and joists, seems done with almost equal carelessness.

137.—To H. F. B. *Am Hof, Oct.* 20.

I am very sorry about "Leopardi." I think Dr. Smith is wrong—but he knows the business of his old blunderbuss best perhaps. "Leopardi" is not "stale" and cannot be. Yet you will understand me when I say that, except from the point of view of money, I do not think the thing matters. You must put the article into what you call your "desolation box"; and please remember, doing so, how large my "desolation box" at your age was, and of what use it has been to me. For the artist I know nothing better than to have a vast and well-filled "desolation box." Mine contains not only scores of miscellaneous essays, but the whole of this Elizabethan history which I may now possibly at last put into shape. Out of the same box has already come my Greek Poets, two volumes of verse, and the larger portion of my "Sketches in Italy."

I do not say this in any vulgar way of encouragement, I hope. I think deliberately that a literary artist must work after this method. You can, if you choose, try, for money's sake, to please the public. But then you must scent out likely, telling subjects. But till you have somehow taken some incalculable sort of start, you will find your "desolation box" a needful haven for your best work. And even when you have made yourself some

name, you will still find (as I do) that there is an impenetrable bar between you and the public.

Is it our defect? That is what we shall probably never know. Meanwhile we are artists and live for the beautiful and our own satisfaction in commune with that.

I find all about the Gaule in Gerard's "Herbal." It is a kind of willow, and is, I think, also bog-myrtle.

138.—To H. F. B. *Am Hof, Nov.* 16.

If you have got the letter I wrote you to Bellagio about a dream * I should have had, which went to you instead at Chiavenna, please send it to me. The Society of Psychical Research is interested in it, and I want to send them extracts from the original documents. It is all bosh. At least the interpretation they will put upon the occurrence of a dream, partitioned between you and me and Mrs. Stevenson and Henry Somerset, is sure to be nonsense.

I fear I have been writing to you letters lately of attenuated excitement. My work has strung me up, and your letters have stirred vibrations. But I believe that I have settled down into the jog-trot of work—mentally I know I have: the only bore is that the friction of thus settling has stirred my lungs up; and I am very far again from well. I have a heavy head-cold, which makes contact with the frozen air horrible.

I liked those *Vilote*, both of them, very much. From the *Largo* of Venetian I rendered them into the *Stretto* of our speech. It is impossible to do justice to that sort of poetry in a translation. It is, in the original, so much the utterance of the heart. And the heart of the people

* A warning not to pursue the journey.

has its own tongue in each nation, which the stranger (though he understand it) renders not.

I am crowded up with invitations to do literary work. Fancy! *Harper's Magazine* wrote three weeks ago, begging me to go to India at their cost with a special artist to make pictures for me. I was to write descriptive articles. He was to illustrate, I was to be paid according to my demands. If you could be the artist, I would go. Otherwise *Nenni, Nenni!*

My business lies now in that desert of the Drama. What a subject it is! I mean how bad to handle, how perilously difficult, impossible to manage! If it were not for the difficulty, I should once more drop it. But I am piqued. However, I do not look forward to more than failure in the matter.

139.—To H. F. B. *Am Hof, Nov.* 20.

(Sent Dec. 1, 1882.)

I have nothing to tell you. The days go with Davos monotony. I career along upon my work at Elizabethan Drama. We are reading Stevenson's "Arabian Nights." They are marvellously brilliant and light. Did I tell you that he broke down at Marseilles? I have not heard from him lately. I got to-night from Henry James (corrected throughout most carefully in his own hand) an essay on the picturesque aspects of Venice, profusely illustrated, in the *Century*. This pleased me, as a handtouch for my Venetian pictures. The book, "Italian Byways," has reached my "Elder."* He is soon to cast off, offer terms, and so to press. I am to get £60 for the first edition.

Do you mean to come here this winter?

* There was, then, no "Elder" in the firm.

140.—To H. F. B. *Am Hof, Feb.* 12.

Your letter is good to get, and I am truly glad to hear how much you enjoyed the dance. What would I not give to be young again, and born into a condition of life where I could have unsophisticated joys and pains!

We had a very successful and festive International Toboggan race yesterday to Klosters, in spite of some fresh snow on the road. About one hundred of the natives entered, and of these twelve were selected. Nine English and foreign visitors made up twenty-one. I was umpire. There were five prizes; and the list came out—

G. Robertson Minsch of Klosters	equal . . .	100 frs.
C. Buol		75 „
C. Palmy		50 „
Hitz of Klosters		25 „
Branger of Dörfli		20 „

Robertson took the laurels and resigned the prize; so five natives got the prizes. The Belvedere runners came nowhere—much to the satisfaction of the Buol people. We had a sort of dinner together, and singing and drinking throughout the day.

Now good-bye. I will seal this letter with the funny little apricot-coloured antique intaglio I took to be set while you were here. It seems to be a rude gladiatorial subject cut for a plebeian's iron ring.

141.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, March* 23.

There is nothing to add to my previous progressive note. I still think if you are in favour of the Riva, that this will be right. After all, the only real thing against it is that we cannot have it till the 25th.

I think I must give the Morea up. It is too risky for me in the early summer. But I hope still a better time may come for it. September is I think the safer time for a man of my type. Perhaps, if we have time at Venice, we might do some coasting together.

I am far from well now. Very tired. It is a great fatigue, more of self than of the bodily organs. How odd it is! I write even these words with that weird and supernatural feeling of my unreality. What is this hand that moves the pen? What is this self that dictates the words? What are the words and what is it that they imply? What, oh what, oh what is thought? It is the only thing—and yet nothing. In moments like this, the real thing is somewhere so far beyond all these phenomena, so tragically, so sarcastically incognisable. The world is a dream, but who is dreaming it? No one ever expressed this mood. But it is the deepest, truest mood of man's existence, which has made me an impassioned sceptic—so hard!

Thanks for your notes upon my sonnets. I will bring the collection "Vagabunduli Libellus" to Venice. I must pack them up to send to press soon. I hope you will soon hear about your book. No one cares much for a book when it is printed. But we all want to get it out.

142.—To H. S. *Davos Platz, March* 24.

I am sorry you have been so far hampered in your plans, and that you could not go to Greece. Is there, I wonder, any chance of our profiting by your Lombard *pis-aller?* We are moving thither in the middle of April, having taken a house upon the Riva at Venice (not far from Danieli's) for the month of May.

No. There is no hope. I have just referred to your

letter for your address. Trin. Coll. Cam.! What syllables! So there is no seeing you in Lombardy or Venice.

Shall you, I wonder, see your brother-in-law's * installation, or whatever it is called, in Canterbury? I think if I were a brother-in-law I should try to hook myself thus to the skirts of English history. Lord Chancellors are impressive personages, but of later date. Archbishops of Canterbury have a great past behind them—even though their lustre be somewhat shorn by family ties and so forth.

I am delighted to hear that you and Mrs. Sidgwick found something in my book on the Italian Arts that was readable. You could not have given me greater pleasure than to tell me this.

Villari is a very good man and, I think, a wise man. He is the sort which ought to have more power in Italy. It would be difficult to find a truer nature even in the north. I think his book on Machiavelli really a solid piece of work—though I do not hold with his determination to white-wash the hero's moral character. Villari's patriotism and his own ethical rightness make him (in my opinion) mistake the *vraie vérité* of that Italian period.

Your critical sceptical Essays sound attractive. I wish I could *hear* them! Have you noticed how very difficult it is to take unfamiliar subjects in through the sense which you habitually use on other matters of study —how a new sense enables the brain to work on a new topic? I have to read history and literature. I can hear philosophy. This may be mere impatience. But I am inclined to think it is not, in my case, at all events, —in the case of a physically fatigued and yet still receptive man.

* Archbishop Benson.

I have got another book of sonnets nearly ready. Few people read what I write in verse. But a few do: and that is enough. Myers' book of poems I think a real success. I could have desired fewer girls in it. But the last poem is, to my mind, a truly fine and solid work.

143.—To H. F. B. *Am Hof, March* 30.

I shall be grateful for any misprints you have noted in "Italian Byways." I have no good map of Venice, only the wretched one in Bædeker. So a great deal of the geography of Bibboni's doings is lost for me. Only I seem to understand pretty well what he did on the eventful day. After the murder, which took place between S. Polo and Palazzo Foscari, he ran till he reached what he calls the Traghetto di S. Spirito. This must be a Traghetto opposite the Rio di S. Barnaba or opposite S. Stefano. Having crossed, his movements on S. Marco, on the Ponte della Paglia, his going in a gondola to the prostitute's and then to Palazzo Collalto, are quite explicable. From Palazzo Collalto, he and Bebo got back to their lodging in the Dorsoduro side of the Canal, and after supper took a boat to go to the Traghetto of Santa Maria Zobenigo, but had themselves put down near the Spanish Embassy. You may know where this was—I conjecture somewhere between Palazzo Cavalli and Palazzo Corner. At all events they stayed there till the Ambassador got them off to Malghera—after which they rode up into the hills of the Trentino, crossed to Mantua and Piacenza, and passed the Apennines by La Cisà. I write all this because you say "the topography is an enigma to me"; and I should like to get it right. I am so audacious, you see, as to think I understand it.

"A Venetian Medley" has got a lot of stupid misprints (*mea culpa*). In fact I corrected the press of this

book very negligently. I am glad you like the "Palace at Urbino." I think it is the best of these things which I have done. Creighton ought certainly to have said something about style. For good or bad, it is certainly style which characterizes the book—far more than matter. But I do not think he has a sense for expression. Nothing of his own writing makes me feel that he has aimed at it, or occupied himself with writing as an art of words. Perhaps one needs to dabble in poetry to get this point of criticism.

144.—To H. F. B. *Davos, April* 4.

I hope your mother has returned quite well and ready for two months more of Venice. We are seeing the first white crocuses of the spring upon uncovered patches of hill-side, and are feeling the spring-god in the air. These things make me dream of the South. I have not much more than this to tell you. I am lying idle, having shaken off the load of Elizabethan Studies—which do not seem to me in any way successful.

To judge by the reviews I have received, my "Italian Byways" is being well appreciated. I am glad of this; for the book is a love-child. *That* is the secret of a book's success. You should some day read "Mes Souvenirs" by Théodore de Banville. It is a most charming piece of Parisian workmanship, for which you and I have a a living protagonist ready in R. L. Stevenson. I have solaced the last three days with it.

Have you ever read "La Zaffetta" of Lorenzo Venier? It was sent me as a rarity by a London book-seller, and is one of the most terrible things (and also most Venetian) I ever studied. Piece upon piece, the more I probe, the more I see the flimsiness of Villari's commonplace apologies for the Italian Cinquecento. We

might dream, or even do such things—but to write them! Love to Warren.

145.—To H. F. B. *Davos, June 27.*

I suppose you are settled now at San Martino di Castrozza. After being very cold—fresh snow and all that sort of thing—warmth has arrived here. The country is in a splendid state, and I never saw the Davos slopes and meadows more rich in flowers.

Please tell your mother how much we sympathize with her in the shock she must have received from the news of that horrible accident. There has always seemed to me something peculiarly grim and ghastly in the smash of a living person upon their own hall-pavement. I don't know why this should affect the imagination more painfully than the fall from a cliff or a glacier or a runaway horse.

We have entered on a new and sorrowful phase of life.* I fear it must be different from what it has been. But now that the surprise and bitter disappointment, for which our weeks in Venice had not prepared me, are over, I can take the fate more calmly. Only I cannot yet imagine what is going to happen.

Thank you very much for your sympathy with me. We do not want our friends to make consolatory observations; but we do feel the better for their kindness.

A great pleasure has come to me in a series of the most magnificent studies done by photography, on which I stumbled in Paris. I enjoy these very much, and shall spend a good deal of money in collecting them. They set my mind at work upon a great many æsthetic questions, which I should like to get into order and work out.

My book on the Dramatists is nearly ready to go to

* The illness of his eldest daughter.

Mr. Smith. H. S. remarks that it will be a crucial test of my reputation. If so, I think it might be prudent to suppress it. But I have never yet thought what effect a book might have upon my literary reputation; and I won't begin. I shall be glad to hear about your own work. If you find it takes more time than you expected, give it. I have a strong instinct that it will take a much better place than the other book,* and *be* much better. It will have many interested friends who know the story of the burned MS.

146.—To H. F. B. *Davos, July 6.*

I am reading Shakspere through and nibbling at Green's "Prolegomena to Ethics." This is the best written and clearest of his works. It has an excellent statement of the Idealistic basis of philosophy in the opening chapters, which ought to be studied by all who give the least thought to world problems. I suppose a creature like —— could not understand it. But if she could, it might make her think twice before she sets "creative nature" in antagonism to "human mind and morals." Such blatant sciolism as that cheap and superficial Spencerism is! I do not say that Green convinces me of his main thesis. But he destroys materialistic dogmatism. It only remains to be driven into a more absolute suspension of judgment, *i.e.* agnosticism, in the present state of inquiry. Either this or a cautious acceptance of the idealistic basis. The fact of Thought renders simple materialism untenable.

* "Life on the Lagoons," burned in a fire at Messrs. Kegan Paul & Co.

147.—To H. F. B. *Davos, July 24.*

I am always glad to hear of your walks and adventures and the beautiful things you see. Illness and old age have not yet made me so callous or so envious that I should be incapable of receiving impressions from such pictures, or should resent my inability to share the pleasures which are denied me. So I enjoy thoroughly (bating a little natural sadness) the account in your last letter (July 21) of the view from Pavione.* My life would be fortunate if I had physical strength enough left to taste the twentieth part of such good things. I crave them as a man in prison craves fresh air and sunlight, and I like to hear about them still. My peril is that, failing these, I should seek excitement in some intellectual or emotional dram-drinking.

I am glad that you and Vaughan are likely to come here. You will probably find Warren. I wonder whether you have translated the two *Vilote* you once sent me—"La brutta cosa," and the one about the bed-clothes crying out. I sent a version of these and of two Tuscan *Rispetti*, communicated to me by Mrs. Ross, to the *Academy* last week. But I have carved the cherry stones so elaborately as to lose the native accent. I shall be curious to see what you do with these popular songs. They seem to me very difficult to translate. It is such an accident if they come off with the spontaneity and simplicity of the originals.

148.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Sept. 23.*

I am oddly pestered always about money. Between Sept. 15 and Sept. 20 I have had three applications here for capital—one man asked for £200, another for

* Above Feltre.

£60, the third for £500. Hardly a month passes without my having to take some one's affairs into consideration. If I lend capital, I get security and am in the position of a Jew. If I refuse, I make a dull, numb enemy!

Have you seen —— ——'s writing which educed Villari's wrath? I take in the *Athenæum*. But I have missed it. If you have the irritating cataplasm, please communicate it to me.

I have not got into any swim of work. The printing of "Shakspere's Predecessors" goes on. And seeing a book through the Press is always tiresome, I find. Proofs make a demand on intellectual tension, leaving one dissatisfied—not worked out or rhythmized, but irritated and unfit for labour.

My wife's carnations get better and better. So do the pansies. I think, with care, we shall find the means of always having, even here, a certain run of flowers. A boy shot a huge bear on the glacier between Fluela and Schwartzhorn two days ago. I saw the beast yesterday, a most formidable animal.

149.—To H. F. B. (*Davos*), *Sept.* 29.

Your letters from Venice to Davos are becoming a most valuable, picturesque and varied series, for which I am glad to know sufficient pigeon-holes are ready. To-night I am rather intoxicated with reading, in proof, the pale reflex of that huge Venetian Masque for Henri III., which I have reduced into sterile English for my book. It is not my style, but the ineffable splendour of the scene as I imagine it—even more the indescribable persuasion of those poised forms in the light and darkness which I saw upon one evening of last June—make me drunken. And the brain here is a fearful magic lantern.

What Beaumont told you about Harriet Shelley strikes me as true. It explains the matter, and dignifies Shelley, who was always a perfect man of breeding (though he made a boy's mistake in marrying that "noble animal"). He shut his lips about her to the world and to his friends, after he had once committed the irrevocable mistake of marrying her.

But about Mira* I am really inquisitive. The tradition was that Byron lent him "I Cappuccini" at Este, and that there he wrote part of "Prometheus Unbound." But how did Byron get this interest in Este? *That* always puzzled me. It would seem more probable on Byron's side that he should have a villa at Mira. My belief is you will find that it was after all at Este. But I think it well worth your while to explore Mira, and see if there is anything at all corresponding to "I Cappuccini" there. If I remember rightly, there are several letters from Shelley from Este; and from Este I always thought that he ascended the Euganean Hills and wrote his famous lines. But how did Byron get a place at Este? Could old Mocenigo help? Byron, who was a close man in money-matters, when he leased that palace of the Mocenighi, would have taken over its dependencies to use as suited his occasions. Had he then in his lease some right to a "Cappuccini" at Este or to a "Cappuccini" at Mira?

150.—To H. F. B. (*Davos*), *Nov.* 3.

If you come across Maxime Du Camp's "Souvenirs Littéraires," you should read it. It is a most valuable book. He says, by the way that Tiepolo painted a fresco of Henri III.'s entrance into Venice at the Pisani

* La Mira, a village on the Brenta.

Villa on the Brenta.* Do you know it? I should very much like a photo of it, if there is one. What a fool one is about Italy—always finding some treasure that has escaped notice in a score of visits to a place! This fresco would have interested me deeply and have made a pleasant object for an excursion.

Oh! what do you think of this project: for me to make a volume of my "Fragmenta Litteraria"† out of extracts from letters, diaries, philosophical meditations, descriptions, criticisms, notes of travel: numbering each fragment with Roman numerals, from i to ccxx say, and adding in italics the *motif* of each fragment? I have such masses of stuff of this sort, some of which (written between 1864 and 1874) seems to me often delicate in style and acute in observation. To use it is almost impossible in any connected form. The question is, whether to utilize materials of this sort, in the way I have indicated, would have the air of cheek!

151.—To H. S. *Davos Platz, Dec. 4.*

Thank you for your letter, and also for the book.‡ It interests me, so far as I have read—but it is too palpably a copy of W. W. I sympathize with the man who wrote it, as I do with—or rather, indeed, as I envy, all the healthy young men who feel impelled to "simplify" (as the Prussians say), and are able, through God's gift of strength and youth, to do so. Walt's influence is advancing. Have you seen Jeffries' "Story

* See Molmenti, G. B. Tiepolo, Milano, Hoepli, 1909, pp. 250–254. The Villa Contarini at la Mira passed to the Pisani, who commissioned Tiepolo to paint the ceiling. The main fresco and two panels are now in the collection of Madame André at Paris.

† Parts I. and II. of these "Fragmenta," entitled by Symonds "Miscellanies," were printed. Part III. was type-written.

‡ E. Carpenter, "Towards Democracy."

of My Heart"? It is W. W. adapted to the style of the gamekeeper: good too, I think, in its monotonous way.

152.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Jan.* 30. [1884.

Tell me (for you will probably see "Shakspere's Predecessors") what you think of the book. I have not sent you a copy; nor have I sent one to any of my relatives; for I really cannot afford to buy them from Smith and Elder, now that I have reached my 18th volume of published works. Roughly calculating, I believe I have pocketed in the gross about £2500 by all my literary work—books, reviews, articles, etc., and that I have returned Smith some £300 in copies purchased for my friends and family. A good £1000 has gone in the purchase of the library required for the production of this literature, beginning with expensive publications like Muratori and Litta, descending to all sorts of ephemeral things, and also in special journeys made for special purposes. Thus at the end of twenty-three years of assiduous literary labour, I may be said to have put £1200 net into my pocket.

153.—To H. F. B. *San Remo, April* 21.

After the first scare about the typhoid * fever was over in the hotel, I found the host a very decent fellow. Self-preservative instincts had made him wanting in delicacy at one moment. But money is a great softener of human selfishness. So things have been less nasty than when I wrote to you in a suppressed rage.

All the same, I am very ill now. I was ill when

* His daughter, Margaret, fell ill at San Remo. See Biography, p. 390.

this trouble came upon us. Then suddenly I had to take the empty villa and rush all over the place to furnish and victual it—tearing about in cabs, sweating, standing in draughts, making memoranda, roasting myself at fire-lighting, hauling beds about, getting the well in order, digging trenches, and answering the countless questions of the bewildered servants I pitchforked into the place.

Things are going fairly smoothly now. Madge is the better for the change. We have a very good sick nurse and doctor. I have ensconced myself in an empty room with one table and one rush-bottomed chair. It has a view over olive trees to the ridge where the village of Colla stands, and which runs up into the pine woods of Bignone. The other window sees a peep of the sea and the vast back of the Hotel West End. A great eucalyptus brushes that window with its boughs in the ceaseless, soughing wind. Wonderful stars shimmer at night, through the summer lightning, upon the big flanks of the hills. I have another room for bedroom, and the whole house, large as a convent, to prowl about in. I thought what a thing it would have been to have had a man like Antonio in the scrimmage. As it is, I have no manservant with me this year, just when I want one most. But I don't find Graubünden people good for work (except when one asks them to drink wine), and so I have got out of the habit of taking one away with me. I shall try to concentrate my attention again on some literature. If anything happened to me which should call your literary executorship into play, please remember that "Vagabunduli Libellus" is ready for publication. The MS. is here. I should like it printed, and Kegan Paul offered last spring to take the book at his own risk. Also a treatise on Latin Student Songs of the Middle Ages—in prose, with the verse

translations I have made, and clear references to the Latin text in "Carmina Burana" and "Gaudeamus"—exists in three MS. books here, ready for printing, though rough in style.

154.—To H. F. B. *Davos, July 17.*

I knew you would like "Mon frère Yves."* It seems to me a great book in the "democratic art" style. (Col. Pearson says that Thorneycroft's "Mower" is a Hermes in the dress of a working man. Is it?) Do you remember the scene in the black-hole of the man-of-war? I lent H. Sidgwick the novel, and his only remark was that it ought not to have ended happily. I cannot regard *such* books as mere plots. They are always human documents for me.

My two little books go on very slowly. Rather more than a fourth of "Vagabunduli Libellus" and about a half of "Wine, Women, and Song" have been printed. I feel queer about "Stella Maris" when I view it all in that large type.

I gave a wine party on Tuesday to ten members of the Davos Gymnastic Society, which went off very well. On Saturday I ought to go to Chur for the Swiss Turnfest—about 1700 gymnasts expected. If the weather is fine, I may go and moon about in the Vorder-Rhein Thal a little. These two books in process of printing render me lazy for beginning another big blotch of literature. Jowett writes as usual urging an Italian History.

155.—To H. F. B. *Davos, July 27.*

I have seemed neglectful of all the interesting letters you have written me lately. The fact is I left home on

* By Pierre Loti.

Saturday the 19th, for a little tour—to the Turnfest at Chur, over to Andermatt, up the Furka, on to the Rhone Gletscher and back by Oberalp—and only returned last Friday evening, when I found a whole ocean of proofs. I spent yesterday in correcting these.

I wish you had been with me at the Turnfest. There were 1700 gymnasts from all parts of Switzerland, Tyrol, and South Germany. They exercised in a great meadow under the crags that guard the opening of Schanfigg, with the distant peaks of the Rheinthal mountains behind them, and the great Lombardy poplars close at hand. It is curious in the Swiss type, how massively vigorous and well-knit and beautifully proportioned the young men are when they strip. Their faces are the worst part about them; and they dress in a way to destroy the least suggestion of comeliness. But no sooner do they show in jerseys with short sleeves than you see almost perfect symmetry and Herculean sinews. I do not wonder they made the best soldiers in the Middle Ages.

I had an absolutely perfect day on the Furka and Rhone Gletscher; all the Bernese Oberland and the mountains above Saas unclouded through a glorious summer's day.

I fear I cannot help you about Charles Dudley. I have no extinct peerages; and Mr. Foster, of course, only traces the present Smithson family from the creation of the Dukedom of Northumberland in 1766. You know, of course, that the Dukedom was in the Dudley family for some time (Lady Jane Grey business), and that it came in comparatively recent times to the Percys. I fancy this Charles Dudley must have been a pretender to the ancient honours of the Dudley family, who thought he would have some chance of imposing on Europe during the Commonwealth. Dudley is one of the North names,

by marriage at the end of the 16th century with a female of the ducal house of Northumberland. But I believe the actual Dudley blood is extinct. I cannot remember whether there was ever more than *one* Dudley who bore the ducal title.

I must get "Il libro delle Vergini"*—Pinkerton told me about it—though I suppose I shall dislike it. You know how wholly I agree about "Yves." The whole book has for me a great charm. The author seems just to hit the right tone of comradeship, without sentiment or suggested passion.

156.—To H. S. *Davos, Aug.* 11.

I was very glad to get the first instalment of your Diary, and to see that you mean business. It is already excellent firstfruits for me of your plan. I will keep the sheets in order in a special place.

On receipt of them it entered into my head to keep a parallel Diary. I thought it might be interesting at some time to compare the daily lives of two men, not dissimilar in education, etc., placed in such very different circumstances at a period when the mind and character of both may be supposed to be fixed. Mine, being filled with only small personal things, will be much longer than yours. To chronicle my daily life, except by dwelling on details, would be ridiculous. I dare say I shall give it up in disgust.

The printing of my "Wine, Women, and Song" is nearly over; and to-day I am sending the last revise of my new book of Sonnets, "Vagabunduli Libellus," to press. I have been wondering whether I shall have a copy sent you, and I think on the whole I shall not. I

* By Gabriele d'Annunzio.

am quite content to agree to differ with my friends about the value of my poetry—and I grow to set less and less store upon any form of literature whatever, my own included. And yet sonnets are such very personal things, after all is said and done, that there is a certain ineptitude in giving them to friends who do not like them.

157.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Oct.* 8.

Thank you for your long letter of Oct. 5. You ask me how I am, and are quick to see from my handwriting that I am not quite well. That is so. It is really a great nuisance for me that continuous and concentrated work takes so much out of me in strength. I don't feel the effort of producing sonnets or translations; but the attempt to get myself into the mental attitude for comprehending a period of history upsets me—even though I work hours in the day which you would regard as ridiculously few. It is a great temptation to stop and be lazy. But I feel impelled to tackle the end of the 16th century in Italy now.

I see the report of cholera in Venice has been amply contradicted in English newspapers. We have it now very near our borders, in the Valtelline in several places. I wonder whether you noticed the refutation of Koch's *comma bacillus* by Ray Lankester in the *P.M.G.* I am glad to have any efficient stone thrown at the beastly Germans.

"The Crucifix of Crema" * is a tragedy in three scenes, written by me in blank verse for three actors. The old Crucifix, you know, with the dagger in the centre of it. I learned while scribbling it, how helpful the dramatic

* Printed in "Fragmenta Litteraria" (Miscellanies), p. 59.

form is when you feel you have a sufficient subject. Didn't I tell you about it before?

Thanks for what you say about "Fragilia Labilia."* Please keep the things. I rather wish I had "cultivated poetry" onward from the epoch of those early things. "The Deserted Pleasance" is as real as anything I ever saw—White Knights near Reading, planted by an old Duke of Marlborough for a sort of *Parc aux Cerfs*, and then neglected.

Thanks, too, for the remarks on Watts (Dunton). I think he distinctly alludes to technical imperfection in the handling of the sonnet by me—imperfect execution in the region of pure art—probably including the paucity of elaborate metaphors and perfumed lines—in fact, the absence of such chiselling finish as one finds in Gosse, not to mention the sultry splendours of Rossetti. There seems to me truth in the criticism.

Thanks, again, for the note about Venice. I must address myself to-morrow to that part of my subject in Romanin.

It appears that (so far as I can now survey my ground) what I shall need to give to Venice and Sarpi will not be very large. The episode was of comparative unimportance, except for calling out Sarpi's powers, in relation to the whole of Italy. What a badly composed book Ranke's "Popes" is! But I am not well enough just now to do good work.

My "Wine, Women, and Song" looks very pretty. I have had a copy addressed to you. The publishers tell me that forty large paper copies, that is, all there were of that sort, were sold before the book appeared, at 15*s.* the copy.

* "By John Addington Symonds (written mostly between 1860 and 1862). Twenty-five copies printed for the Author's use, 1884. Printed by Ballantyne & Hanson, Edinburgh. Cost of paper, printing and wrapper, £6." (Note by J. A. S.)

Shall I send you some Valtelline wine *this* autumn, or wait till your house is ready? The point is that it will make a crust, and ought not to be moved after it once comes to Venice.

158.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Nov.* 22.

It is bitterly cold here. We have hardly any snow yet, and a temperature of 40° Fahr. at night. I almost always see the dawn with its awfully luminous star, and read by lamplight dismal stories of old times.

I have examined your MS. of the pseudo-Sarpi and compared it with the two English translations. Both are fairly accurate, and are made independently from a MS. that does not essentially differ from yours.

Sarpi is a great writer. I am reading his "History of the Council," and have read his "Essay on the Inquisition." I think he takes a very important place in the development of modern political opinion. But he is heroic in his relation mainly to the forces against him—the Church and the Jesuits.

I get very curious letters from England about my two last books. All people seem to like the *prose* in "Wine, Women, and Song," and to be repelled by "Stella Maris." Some of the things said, even by friendly critics, about the latter are rather painful to me.

I wonder again and again why one gives one's brain-work to the world. It is a very odd impulse. No gain in money. Some loss in reputation. And yet one does it—in the dear hope, perhaps, of smiting a sympathetic being here or there. I lose health and strength so obviously by literature that the impulse in me is more unaccountable than it would be in a vigorous man.

159.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Nov. 27.*

I was feeling that I owed you a letter, and here comes yours of the 25th acknowledging one of mine. So I suppose I was not in your debt. But you have not sent me Young's formula for *Staphisagria*. What odd dogmatists the old English physicians are! They refuse to avail themselves of herbal lore, which the homœopathists have seized on to the benefit of humanity, and which a few clever ones like Young exhibit.

I dare say it has been colder at Venice to the sense than here. I never feel so cold as I do in Italy; and all agree about this—there is an emphatic paragraph in Lord Malmesbury's amusing "Memoirs" on this point. Yet it is cold here, too—night temperature never above 5°, oftener at zero, and no snow to mitigate the pinch. All the same, I bathe in cold water, and when I write at noonday, have to shut the outside shutters to keep my brains from being boiled by the sun. I meant to write you a good letter, but have wasted powder and shot on a long epistle to Walt. Whitman. Clifford * has been seeing him and drawing him—good!

160.—To H. S. *Davos Platz, Nov. 28.*

I have some time wanted to tell you how very much I look forward to your Diary, and what pleasure it gives me when it comes, and also that I keep it with the best care in a special drawer of my bureau.

Nothing interests me more in the diary than the minutest details (of which I never get enough) concerning Psychical Research. About these matters I want to hear; and I can promise that your communications shall be confidential, and I will so arrange that your MSS. shall (in the event of my death) revert to you absolutely,

* Edward Clifford, the painter.

or to any person you choose to indicate. You will therefore gratify me, contribute much to the history of a most important psychological movement in England, and enforce your own desire to write a diary, if you will put as much as possible of the S. P. R. into your journal.

Next to that topic, I appreciate very highly what you say about English Politics. I am so constituted that I must always reserve the foremost place of interest for things that concern *you* personally. I tried to keep a Diary, *pari passu* with you. I meant to send you this. But I found, in the exhausted receiver of the High Alps, it became so fearfully egotistic (when it did not record the smallest of small beer) that in disdain I rejected the two months' daily work I had spent on it. Such Diary as I can do here has to go into poetry, and it exists in "Vagabunduli Libellus." As poetry, I do not doubt it is below contempt. As written expression of my life, it is the best I can do.

The English parties are doing quite disgracefully, and I fervently hope they will bring forth an English Revolution.

P.S.—I am very sorry to have missed your notes about Mme. Blavatsky. In your next *Lieferung* you will give the substance of your impressions: it will edify me. I think she is not unworthy of some consideration in the scale of us homuncules.

161.—To H. S. *Davos Platz, Dec.* 5.

I have your last *Lieferung* of the so-called Diary. It always interests me very much, and I could only wish that it should become more copious, taking the natural flux of days. This is hardly to be expected, however, in the present state of your health. You ought to live in a better climate, and to be less anxious about work. You

have done a good amount of work in your life—and after all work is not everything. I often regard it, in its English sense, as a dyspeptic Juggernaut. Truly, I cannot conceive why we should go around torturing ourselves with the exhibition of our impaled-cockchafer energy, and why we should regard this display of rotatory motion as meritorious—we *do*—at least, it requires a certain mental effort to disengage ourselves from the notion that what we do is of importance, and is of more value than διαγωγή. I can myself see nothing in anybody's activity except the exercise of impulses inherent in him, many of which (in many cases) appear to me morbid from hypertrophy and false considerations of self.

I am sorry to hear that the S.P.R. evidence is so untrustworthy. After making up my mind that a certain number of excellent persons gave unsatisfactory evidence in the case of miracles, I am quite prepared to find the same sort of witnesses break down now. It does not seem to me to signify greatly; for if they all told the truth, and the facts agreed with their statements, we should not be really any "forrader." We should know some more about the behaviour of the nervous system, and knowledge has a sort of interest. But we already, in this way, know much, and it does not do us much good that I can see.

While we have the power of reflection, we can amuse ourselves here with manifold toys, and that seems to me about the sum of human scope. All these toys, virtuous and vicious in the vulgar nomenclature, seem to me precisely on one level of importance in relation to the secret of the Universe. Their scale of values is really in regard to the comfort and well-being of the individual. But I am talking (not at random) too glibly out of my actual convictions.

162.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, March* 18. [1885.

It seems long since I heard from you. But I believe I am in debt to you for a letter. The bother in my hand goes on, and this makes writing troublesome; I have also been very hard at work. After finishing a chapter on the social conditions of the latter half of the XVIth Century, I plunged into Bruno. Berti has printed the process in the Venetian Inquisition against Bruno. As usual, Venetian archives are in his case decisive. The lucidity of Venice is a remarkable fact.

I have arranged now to bring both Janet and Madge to Venice in April. I should like to get quite into the *Calcina*, in order to have no fuss about kitchens. Will you kindly tell me what is the most convenient hotel* at Innsbruck and at Trento? I like old-fashioned inns best, if I can get them. But it is difficult to be sure one does not hit upon some musty haunt of rheumatism, pleurisy, and mouldy wine.

163.—To H. F. B. *Innsbruck, June* 3.

I scarcely think it needful to acquaint you with our progress so far. But the feeling of Venice still lingers with me—I think some of the salt of it still remains on my moustache. I am very glad to be in the mountains again. I feel physically better here. But the many charming things we saw together there: the white sail of the "Waring"†; the dunes of Tre Porte; the long-drawn melodies of Istria, and Udine, and San Daniele—all are a golden chain of many links which will not break. The heart is happy to be going to its home. It remembers its *diverticulum* with joy. Man thirsts for clarity of vision. The sensual desires it in some body. The

* Then a *trattoria* on the Zattere. Ruskin stayed there.
† An Ancona-built sailing-boat.

moral in some law. The intellectual in some definition. The religious in some creed or beatific insight. How shall beings, as complex as we, expect to find this clarity in the mixed quantities that make our wandering life? For myself, I am too tired to be more than grateful for what I have had, have, and childishly hope to have.

164.—To H. S. *Ragatz, June 17.*

We left Venice last Monday, driven away at length by the great heat. It is hardly cooler here; and I shall be glad to get into the mountains again. I suppose there is about ten months of Davos now ahead; though the state of my family, as usual, is so confusing that I can form no plans on which to depend with even human approximation to probability. The main fact about me internally is that I am doing the sequel to my "Renaissance." This is practically an inquiry into the methods used by the Catholic Powers to check the Renaissance and the Reformation. I wonder whether you have paid attention to Sarpi's writings, and what you think of him in the history of political speculation?

Have you read Amiel's "Journal"? I have just got it, and am looking through it with a curious sense of being stifled and sickened—in spite of its stylistic charm.

165.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, June 26.*

Thanks for your letter of the 22nd, and for the proof of my article on the Renaissance. It was rather selfish of me to ask you to read the latter; but I thought you might suggest some omissions I had made or some superfluities I had inserted, before it was too late. As you once said, each man sees history so differently as to

make his insight an originality—and I wanted to test my view of the matter in question by yours.

You are quite right that this is not on the type of an Encyclopædia Article. It is an Essay. But it is the first article (I believe) under the heading "Renaissance" which the Encyclopædia Brit. has yet printed. The period of history has only been defined during the last twenty-five years, and its importance recognized. Hegel, for example, skips it almost dryshod in his "Philosophy of History"—passing with no transition from the Middle Ages to the German Reformation, ignoring the part played by Italy in modern culture. I therefore felt bound to discourse after the fashion of a treatise.

I understand your longing for rest. It will not come, however, till the house is finished. But meanwhile I hold it good you should be relieved of visitors. R—— was, you say, as inexacting as a guest could be, and I believe that. Yet the mere presence of a guest is something. I shall be very curious to hear from time to time what N—— is doing. I confess he did not strike me either as an interesting personality or as a powerful man. It is, however, a great point for his social chances that he delights in society and that women take to him. These qualities often advance a man—provided he has ambition and power of work—more than will or than creative force. Mrs. G—— sent me a curious report about him from Z——, which shows that he did not impress Z. with more than his acquisitive ability. But that opinion does not count for much. A tutor rarely has insight into the obliquely successful points in a man's character.

I have greater ups and downs than usual in my attempt to recover health. But I have set my work again on the anvil, and am hammering away at the Jesuits. I have a vast canvas to fill.

166.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, July 6.*

I have not responded to your letters for three reasons. First, the continued weakness of my right hand. Secondly, that I have been at work on my Italian History. Thirdly, that a good deal of my time and thought has been occupied by some business here.

You will be glad to get into the mountains. The heat must be very trying. If your weather at all resembles ours, however, you are pretty cool and damp just now. All you write about the "Favorita" * sounds very charming. What do you rent it by the month for? Do you think it would do for us in May one year?

The tale I wrote in the "Waring" and in the train to Udine appeared in a Bazaar magazine, together with a tale by Dan Cave, a tale by my cousin Miss Abdy Williams, and a lyric by St. Loe—plenty for one family.

Is not this a nice coat? Quarterly: 1 and 4 "Azure, 3 eagles displayed, or," FitzSimon; 2 & 3 "ermine, on a bend gules, 3 eagles displayed, or," Baghault. I found it on a 16th-century brass in the Church of Great Yeldham, Essex, quartered with one variant of my paternal coat, viz. "Azure, a chevron engrailed, between three trefoils, or." This brass was to Richard FitzSymonds (*sic*).

The British Museum has bought *all* the North MSS., I am pleased to say. Catherine writes me to say they form a large mass of very miscellaneous material, besides the "autobiography." There was a MS. copy of Roger North's autobiography which Miss North purchased from the Brit. Mus. agent, and which I hope will be to-day within my hands; for I expect my wife and little Katherine from London, and she has promised to bring the document. Miss North will, I hope, have it collated with the

* A house on the Lido, built by a Duke of Brunswick.

autograph and published. She thinks of entrusting this to Dr. Jessop, the Norfolk antiquarian and Arcadian parson.

Here you have a rambling epistle enough! Ruedi gave an improved account of me. He said three days ago that he thought me in a very serious state when I first returned from the journey (to Venice), but that he wished more of his patients had my power of reacting against grave organic disorder. It was the resumption of literary work—writing the chapter on the Jesuits—I am convinced, which gave me a turn to better health.

167.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, July* 24.

This is I suppose the last letter I shall address to Venice before you leave for the mountains. It is stupendously beautiful, this summer weather. I have always been most sensitive to the beauty of the world in illness. Though the range of enjoyment is so narrow, the entrance into communion with nature is somehow more intimate. There is something in long restless nights and watchings from the window for the gradual approaches of the dawn, which fixes on the soul the sacredness of spiritual life in outer objects.

I have just decided to spend a certain sum of money in having all sorts of MSS. printed. I told you about this project at Venice. Since then the Edinburgh printers have offered better terms. Gradually I should like to make a clearance of my yet remaining stores of prose and verse. They are going to print for me in slips, six copies. I may thus obtain the material for a book of miscellanies, more *intime* than anything I have as yet published. I look forward to the arrangement and revision of this stuff as a relief from the solemn, solid production of Chapters on Italian History. Thank

you for the title of Manso's book on Tasso. It is not so good a book as Fra Fulgenzio's "Sarpi." But it has some of the *naïf* qualities so remarkable in that life.

August 1. I have long intermitted this letter. But my body has been imposing upon my spirit indignities which can be borne only with difficulty, and during the incumbency of which it is well for a self-respecting soul to hold its peace.

August 4. I do not know where to send this better than to Venice. It is not worth sending, except in so far as the dates show that I have not ceased thinking of you. Until I have something livelier to say, I will henceforth hold my tongue.

168.—To H. F. B. (*Davos*), *Aug.* 14.

I am exceedingly glad to know that you are off to the hills at last, and that you are out of anxiety about your household.* Your last letter made me really anxious. Nothing, as I too well know, is more trying than the persistence of that noisome complaint. It seems to me more demoralizing than any debauchery, and taints the imagination through the enfeebled nerves.

I did go up the Schwartzhorn with pain, and suffered much in consequence. Ruedi said I was mad, and took occasion to observe that all consumptive people are a little mad. Indeed I believe he is right about me, but not in the way he suspects. I am better though. Ruedi assures me that I must only have patience, that it is better to leave such things alone.

Warren is here; and there have also been three Balliol men on the Lake. We had a great symposium with the natives here last night—such a row, but very jolly. The house is full of women. I am very tired. It is altogether

* They all got gastritis on the Lido.

an odd life up here. Nothing seems capable of taking the edge off. My work goes on. The book is approaching its completion. At least I see my way now to the end, and know pretty well what more I have to do—a chapter on the Bolognese painters, a chapter on miscellaneous literature, and perhaps a final one on the whole matter. Meanwhile I have begun printing "Paraleipomena" (the MS.); 42 pages are already in proof. But 36 of these are a long essay on Goethe's Proemium to "Gott und Welt," which I wrote in 1864. My prose then had a lyrical cry which has for ever passed beyond my reach. I suppose it will chiefly be a matter of expense how much I print, for I find considerable stores that seem to me worthy of this kind of semi-preservation.

A copy of Mutinelli's "Storia Arcana" reached me lately: cost a good deal, £1 16*s.* 6*d.* It is worth the money, a very valuable book.

169.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Aug.* 21.

I cannot help laughing at the robbery of your wardrobe, and rejoicing at the prospect of a fresh start in clothes! But the misfortune is that last spring you were noticeably better dressed than used to be the case. So the thieves have got more than if they had come two years sooner. Have they stolen the lovely brown velveteen coat?

I can at last report a real improvement in my health. My right hand too is much stronger. Ruedi is not sanguine about the hand being ever quite well again. Already, however, I can use the pen and the alpenstock better than I did. So I have not much to complain of now. Only I have not enjoyed the summer altogether. There has been lots of work done. I am tired of the perpetual phraseology of criticism. I wish it were possible to invent a new form of sentence.

I will certainly send you my Fragments when I have a good show. I wish, indeed, that I dared call them "Aurea Opuscula"! But I believe they will contain some fairly decent pieces. Warren, who is still here, picked up "Fragilia Labilia" yesterday and was pleased to be taken with them.

Tell me, would you really like me to send you Valtelline wine this autumn? I mean, do you care for it enough to pay the duty and carriage? for I find that it will be safest not to prepay the case. Properly speaking, Valtelline wine ought to pay no duty on entering Italy. But I suppose it will be impossible to have that advantage.

I am intensely stupid this morning after a riotous night. Also (wonder at me!) I read the whole of the "Adone" of Marini, 45,000 verses, in two days—yesterday and the day before. It is a very extraordinary poem, and I shall have a good deal to say about it.

170.—To H. F. B. (*Davos*), *Sept.* 3.

Davos is certainly an odd place as to climate. We never seem to get appreciably *bad* weather. While you have had that drip of rain at San Martino, we have never had anything worse than a heavy shower or a day half-clouded.

I have sent Pinkie * a copy of "South Sea Idylls." Make him lend it you and read "Chumming with a Savage." You won't like the man. Yet the picture he draws of savage kindness is very fascinating. I am squandering my time now abominably. It seems very hard to keep eurhythmic in Davos. I despise X. for submitting to the tyranny of a depressing climate, and here am I shredding myself to tatters by indulging in the tension of this stimulative air. My nerves are

* Percy Pinkerton.

like the wires of a new spring bed—all aquiver about nothing. Addio.

171.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Sept.* 14.

I wish I could be with you in Venice this autumn. But, though I have smoked some pipes over the possibility, so as not to abandon the idea unconsidered, I must give it up.

Change I want. But I dare not take the change in Venice. To tell the truth, I always pay pretty heavily in physique for my visits to Venice ; and this autumn I am really forced to economize resources. I shall probably take a little journey with Madge across the hills to Landeck, on to Munich, and back by the Boden See. If we make this excursion, I mean to take Sarpi's "Letters" and the three Lives I possess of him as my travelling companions. I find that after all I shall have to give a chapter of my book to him.

What you call "Aurea Opuscula" (I wish the title were deserved) shall reach you in due course. At present the printers have a mass of MS. still in their hands. This literary hay must be estimated to some extent by bulk and diffusion of interest. I do not care to send you 80 pp. when in a short while I may have 180 to send. As before, so now, I expressly deprecate the notion of being thought to want you or any one to read through all that. But I should like you to have a sufficient quantity of the stuff to browse on.

I am glad that what I said about your work gave you a lift. When you settle down into "Ca' Torresella," you must go at it in earnest. Possibly you are upon the point of differentiating, determining your species as a student. You may find that your sphere is the unearthing and elucidating of documents, the doing of such

bits of work as this inquiry into Venetian printing. But I advise you to give the other and wider sort of literature, history or biography in the liberal sense, a fair chance. In either department Venice will supply you with sufficient matter, and your love for Venice will lend you the energy of enthusiasm.

We are having heavenly weather just now. I am very content to enjoy it. In Italy it would be more entrancing. But I should not sleep so well there. *Spartam nactus sum; hanc ornabo.*

172.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Sept.* 25.

Madge and I started for our journey on the 16th and returned yesterday, having had good weather all the time. We drove over Fluela, stopped at Pontresina, then over Bernina, rested at Tirano among the vines of the Valtelline, crossed the Stelvio and rested again among the orchards of Schluderns (whence we cast longing glances down the Etsch), returned by Münsterthal and Ofener Berg.

I am truly sorry to have abandoned Venice. But it could not be helped. Ruedi gave a bad report of me the day before I left, and would not hear of my going even to Munich.

Have you seen Ouida upon the Gondoliers and Venice in general?

I read Sarpi's "Letters" and Miss Campbell's "Life" of him on the journey. The letters are a most valuable source of history. Did you not once tell me that Miss C.'s life contained documents bearing on the point of Sarpi's being possibly surrendered to Rome? I can find none such. The English (which is the original of this life) is miserably written and quite ungrammatical. Does the Italian version give the originals of the documents she

translates? If so I must get it. Pray tell me where it was printed. I get to like Sarpi more, and to admire his marvellous political penetration. Some passages in the letters are incomparable for insight. But I cannot seize his attitude towards religion. My belief is that he would willingly have accepted the Reformation if he could have done so without leaving Venice. There is a suspicion in my mind that the letters to Duplessis Mornay may have been tampered with to make them appear more Protestant. If they are quite genuine, then I see not how Sarpi can be defended from duplicity. "Il travaillait sourdement à discréditer la Messe qu'il disait tous les jours," said Bossuet; and certainly his language about Catholic dogmas to Duplessis M. is incompatible with sincere Catholicism. Have you formed any judgment about these letters? I shall write a chapter about Sarpi, leaving, however, his *Venetian* services almost untouched. He comes into my subject rather for his attitude towards the Catholic Revival.

What you wrote from Asolo about experience is only sadly too true. I agree with R. L. Stevenson in holding that the right human life is to take our fill of all the activities and pleasures proper to each age. In that way man need have no regrets. But so many of us warped human beings invert the order of life, are never young, and so are never wholesomely middle-aged or old.

173.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Oct.* 8.

I should have written to you earlier but that since September 26, whenever I took up a pen, it was to make notes or to work at a chapter on Sarpi. He is an impermeable, incommensurable man—ultimately, I think, possessed with two great ideas, duty to God and duty to Venice. His last words were for Venice, the penultimate consigned his soul to God.

To a mind like his the materials of dispute between Catholic and Protestant must have seemed like Tweedledum and Tweedledee. He stayed where he was, in a convent of the Servites, where he had taken root in youth, because he could serve God there quite as well or better than in any Protestant Conventicle. If Venice had inclined towards final rupture with Rome, if indeed Venice had had the power to make that rupture, Sarpi would have hailed the event gladly as introducing liberty of conscience and purer piety and the depression of Papal supremacy in Italy. But the State of Venice had chosen to abide in the old ways, and Sarpi knew that Venice could not cope with Spain and Rome and Jesuitry. Therefore he possessed his soul in patience, and adored the God in whom he trusted, through those symbols to which he had from youth been educated, trusting the while that sooner or later in his Providence God would break those mighty wings of Papal domination. So I seem to read Sarpi. But after all construction of his character upon the lines of letters and signed writings, the man evades my vision. It was not for nothing that Sarpi made himself a friar at fourteen years of age.

In my History I am always grasping at shapes and souls of men; Bruno, Marino, Chiabrera, Tassoni, Sarpi, not to speak of the greater and the lesser Tasso, with a host of others, have been flitting across the *camera obscura* of my brain for months. I am dizzied by the dance of personalities so diverse. I want rest and reaction, but where to find it, face to face with these inexorable hills, or in the company of peasants who inflame the brain with wine and noise? Fain would I fly away. But nowhere from my own soul and its responsibilities can I fly. I thought to devour thought in a diligence upon the road to Chur to-morrow. But Janet's state to-night forbids the journey. And should I have

made it, I should only have carried my restlessness to a dull point from which I should then have carried it back again to a point of dismal industry.

There are dry stony substantial promontories in middle-life, shooting out into a surge of waters, upon which the self is impelled, unwilling yet incapable of resistance, and from which there is no exit except death's desirable determination.

174.—To H. F. B. (*Davos*), *Oct.* 11.

Your letter of the 8th came last night. What you report about the Master of the Rolls is most satisfactory. If you get that appointment you will be singularly happy: to have a public position connected with the studies and the place you love best, to be living in Venice with health to enjoy all these things and the society of so many interesting people as are always visiting Venice—all this constitutes a very fair share of human felicity.

When I reckon up my own goods and bads, I place an incurable discord in the soul first, next, chronic bad health, thirdly, the want of congenial society and external stimulus, and, lastly, want of success in literature. I think a man who has followed an art through a lifetime without making it pay and without securing some public distinction must be said to have failed.

I was reading Macaulay's "Life" last night. It seems to me a little beyond the mark for a member of the Indian Council, living with the best Anglo-Indian Society, in perfect health, employing his time in framing the code for a great Empire, to complain of the "pangs of banishment."

By the way, both Macaulay and Hallam take for granted that Sarpi was a Protestant. I find it difficult to state my opinion about Sarpi; but that he felt more

sympathy with any of the then existing Protestant Churches than for Catholicism (apart from Papal tyranny and ecclesiastical abuses) I cannot admit.

175.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Oct.* 25.

I hope to get the corrected copies of what I call "Fragmenta Litteraria" or "Paraleipomena," in a few days. Then I shall send you a copy. There are 142 pages printed—46 lines (I think) to the page, when uninterrupted—but for the most part, the pages are broken. I cut off the supply of copy for two reasons; one that it costs a good deal to print these things; the other that I have now a sufficient sample. Whether I go on with the affair will depend upon what I feel upon reflection about the utility of it. There seems to be an almost inexhaustible fountain of such stuff, in MS., as these 142 pp. represent.

If you take the sheets up for perusal I advise you to skip the first 36 pages. These contain a theological essay written in 1864, to the main points of which I still adhere, but which can hardly be regarded as literature—in spite of its tumultuous incoherent quality of passion.

An autobiographical fragment, pp. 57–59, is perhaps worth looking at.

Verses, pp. 66–74, are a jumble of several periods.

The chief point on which I seek your opinion is this: whether it is worth printing "Silhouettes"—pp. 74–103 and pp. 127–139. Of these I could commit to type almost any quantity; for it has been my habit to throw off such adumbrations and suggestions upon loose leaves of paper or copy-books—often retaining notes of conversations and sometimes passages from letters, as you may peradventure recognize.

Look at the poem "Music" on p. 103. It is a frag-

ment eviscerated from a lengthy romance. Also look at the poem, "Two Dreams in One," on p. 106.

The jottings upon Clifton and Sutton Court landscape, pp. 108–125, will probably be only interesting to myself.

176.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Dec.* 6.

I sent off last night the Fragments. They had come at last. But they present so superb a margin that I somewhat doubt the letter post receiving them. You had better get them put into a limp cloth cover. This will take off the effect of proofs.

I have just been called away from this writing to look at an ermine which has taken to haunt our woodhouse. It is a lovely little beast; pure white, with large black eyes, a black tip to its tail, and a shade of yellow on the rump and hind legs. I did not know they were a common European beast. This is exactly like the creature on my crest.

177.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Dec.* 12.

(Therm: 4° Fahr. below zero outside, 10 a.m. 46° on writing table.)

Above details will explain why brain is numb and fingers stiff.

How very kind of you to look yourself into the Cases I asked about at the Frari!* I don't think I can go to the expense of having the whole copied, or that I could spare the time. I should like such abstracts made as will show the heads of accusation, the drift of the trials, and the causes for their protraction after so many years.

Some light may be thrown on the men in question, especially the Anabaptists, which will make an important

* Papers of the Sant' Ufficio in the Archives at the Frari.

modification of view with regard to the Inquisition in general at Venice. Books like the "Histoires des Martyrs" are quite unscrupulous in claiming as victims of Rome crazy or antisocial creatures whom no State would tolerate.

I wish I had sent you my "Fragmenta" in boards. The binder has done a copy for me rather nicely. There are six copies in existence, of which you have one and I have five.

178.—To H. F. B. *Badenweiler, May 7.* [1886.

Your letter from Asolo by its sympathy induces me to write more openly than in the incoherent lines I sent you last night.

The case with Janet is very sad. She has been a fortnight in bed, growing daily weaker. I apprehend no immediate calamity. But she has never been so ill before. We are at sixes and sevens. We do the best to keep each other in exercise and spirits. But what a life!

This place is certainly beautiful. Thick woods of silver pine, mingled with oak and beech upon the lower levels, sometimes opening into meadows of the richest grass, sometimes so tangled that the sun scarcely pierces their roof of branches. There is an undergrowth of ferns, with "frail wood-sorrel and bilberry bell" in rippling sheets among the mosses. Abundant water flows through the grass, which is everywhere enamelled with marsh-marigold and white narcissus and orchises and lilac cuckoo-flower. Far away stretches the Rhine-valley, bordered on the west by that exquisitely pencilled outline of the Vosges—a poetic country, a modern Arcady, with simple folk inhabiting its comfortable old farm-houses.

I write a good deal in the open air; upon the wall of the Castle, or in the open spaces of the Park, or further away in wooded glades by streams where green lizards whisk about half-tame around me. I have rough-hewn "Sidney," all but the last two chapters (two out of eight). It is all stippled with small touches, except the critical essays on his writings.

One afternoon I climbed the Blauen, the highest point here, and one of the highest in the Schwartzwald. The prospect was dreamily fine, illimitable: fancy the Rhinethal, from Basel to Strasburg, and the Bernese Oberland, Eiger, Mönch, etc. It is all sweetly sad: made for poetic melancholy and tender meditation. But I am not tuned for it: too much on the fret, dispirited, discouraged.

The inn is good. Excellent wine of many sorts at rather less than three marks the bottle. But what does that signify?

179.—To H. F. B. *Badenweiler, May* 11.

I can give you a better account of our affairs here this evening. Janet has to-day shown decided improvement. The doctor now hopes she will advance to recovery.

I might have been in London to-night, dining at Miss North's with the Holman Hunts, the Frank Galtons, Scherer, the French critic, Haggard, the author of "Solomon's Mines," Miss Gordon Cumming, Lord and Lady North, Newton of the British Museum, and a few others. I had thought of going to England. But this plan is now abandoned. It is not absolutely necessary, for business, that I should be there. And every year I find the inclination to keep away more overwhelming. There must be some evil in this growth averse to

English life. I suppose the base of it, however, in my nature is the weakness which I feel when I try to undergo the conditions of English society.

I got a letter from Pinkie to-day in which he says you were returning upon the 9th. He speaks of the cholera as serious. Frankly I doubt whether your book of poems will be as reviewable as Pinkie's.* That lent itself to the quoter. I believe we are all asses (I first and foremost in offending) when we publish our poems. Yet the doing so eases our souls—for some quite inscrutable reason; and if we can afford the consolation, and expect nothing from the public in return for our gifts, I suppose there is no reason to be urged against it.

Discouragement weighs like a cloud here. Life appears certainly not in smiling colours. There is a heavy soft rain falling. Writing at "Sidney" has become a weariness now that the work is all finished.

180.—To H. F. B. *Badenweiler, May* 24.

It is very long since I wrote to you. You asked why I suggested anonymous publication. It was really because of my own discouragement as a poet. I do not think that any verses I have published have brought me reputation. I could just as well have watched their effect, if they had gone out without my name; and then, in your case, you are going to embark upon so very different lines of work, that I believe the sort of name one gets nowadays for poetry may be injurious to you. This is the brief statement of the matter as it strikes me. But I dare say that I am jaded and taste with a distempered appetite. I believe I am right in saying that Louis Stevenson sold the *copyright* of "An Inland Voyage" for £20. And the *copyright* of "Virginibus

* "Galeazzo," by Percy Pinkerton.

Puerisque" for £50. Smith treated me always better. He paid £60 for the right to publish 1000 copies of each volume of the Greek Poets, and the same sort of sum for "Italian Sketches," leaving the copyright in my hands, and paying again for a second edition of 1000 copies.

Catherine and I have taken a short driving tour. We were out three days, seeing all the valleys of this end of the Schwartzwald, and getting up to the top of the biggest hill—Feldberg, 5000 feet above the sea. It is a wonderful country for woods: endless trees of all sorts, and some of them superb; beautiful old farm-houses nestling among the forests; river scenery of the finest, when one has descended upon the Rhine at places, Säckingen and Laufenburg. I am glad to have made acquaintance with the country. It is like a very perfect England in detail—with breadth and space of mountain and plain to make up for the absence of ocean. The heat has been terrific. I have corrected 120 pages of my book in the last twenty-four hours, and I cannot write a good letter.

181.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, June* 13.

I think of you much and often in your stricken city. If it rains there as it has been doing here, the melancholy will be deepened. Here we are blessing the heavens for the continual downpour, which is saving the hay-harvest, it is hoped. I never saw the valley more parched with drought than when I came back ten days ago.

I wonder whether it would trouble you to discover whether the Marciana contains the second edition of the "Rime di Nic: Franco contra P. Aretino," 1546. A scholar, unknown to me, has written to enquire about it. He is privately printing an edition of the 3rd edit., 1548. The same man, Robert S. Turner, asks about Francisco

Delicado (in Spanish, Delgado), who worked a great deal (he says) at Venice and published there, and was imitated by Aretino, who lived in familiarity with him. I have told Mr. Turner that I meant to refer these questions to you. I will ask you also, on my own account, whether Rawdon Brown has anything about Philip Sidney's visit to Venice. Sidney was there from the autumn of 1573 to the summer of 1574. He had his portrait painted by Paolo Veronese.

I have written, since I came to Davos, an introduction to a book of selections from Sir Thomas Browne, which is going to form a volume of the Camelot Classics. I read Pater's essay. I did not think it quite up to his mark. The best passage was a curious discourse upon Browne's "Letter on the Death of a Friend."

Literary work, fortunately, does not fail me, and I am always having invitations to do more. Fancy being asked to produce a new translation of "Cellini's Autobiography" for an illustrated edition *de luxe!* If I can make good enough terms I feel inclined to undertake it. Only it ought to be paid well, and time allowed to do the work artistically. Goethe translated it, and Comte put it into the Positivist Library.

I have promised to do selections and introductions to Webster, Tourneur, and Heywood for a series started by Havelock Ellis. He also wants me to write a short general introduction on the Elizabethan Drama. Sometimes my hand gets very tired with writing, and English words seem to fail me.

I wish indeed I could get hold of the "Carmen de Moribus Stud." *Beanus*, by the way, is a Freshman! The mediæval students treated him atrociously.

182.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Oct. 27.*

I have been drowned in a morass of Cellini, working eight hours a day, and sleeping afterwards like a pig. I have got through four-fifths of the translation. But it is a very heavy bit of work, taxing all the resources of the English language in two very different ways—first, to match his immense vocabulary of popular speech and technical terminology; next, to cope with the wearisomeness of his perpetual repetitions in the connective tissues of a narration. Just now I am well-nigh worn out again; though, thanks to good regime and the Zürich doctor, my eyes are perceptibly stronger. I wish Venice were not so far off! In these golden lingering autumn days I think too often with a pang of Italy. The snow delays long this year; yet it must come at last. Meanwhile, it seems at times a sin to waste the last glad hours in work, which could be done as well in winter when the magic of the world is over.

Do you know the Trichinopolies you gave me have proved a great success. I have sent for another box and am smoking one now while I write. I have also ordered more of several sorts. I believe they are good to lay down here. They lose less in flavour than Havannas, and are very wholesome.

À propos of assassination and the feeling about tyrannicide and homicide in general, I will send you, if you like it, references to Jesuitical Casuists whom you will doubtless find in the Marciana. I believe the earlier Italian sentiment was founded upon mere *Faust-recht*, bolstered up by some words in S. Thomas Aquinas and the great examples of Plutarch.*

It is curious that we remain so vague about Italian reckoning of time. In some places they certainly

* See "Biography," p. 413.

reckoned from sunrise and sunset. But in Rome they reckoned, I think, only from sunset, for the latest hours of *afternoon* are in summer 22 and 23. After the latter begins *una ora di notte* and so onwards. I imagine it is impossible to fix the exact hour now with precision, in dealing with a document like "Cellini's Memoirs," where the season of the year is generally undefined. But I shall be truly grateful if your own researches indicate an authority upon this topic. How many of these once familiar things seem to escape the human mind after the lapse of a few years!

183.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Nov. 6.*

Please forgive me if I seem somewhat neglectful. I am working this Cellini against time, and have now only about seven days more of the translation. But revision, annotation, introduction, will occupy much of the short space at my disposal; and till I see the *opera venuta* (in Cellini's language) I am anxious about my power "*sfinirla*" (also his).

Thank you for the note about *bandelle* and the drawing. I find I had got the right idea of the sort of hinge which other commentators and translators appear to have missed. I wish I could spend some hours in a brass-foundry, first at Venice and then in England, so as to catch the technical terms used by my author when describing the casting of his Perseus. Perhaps I may bore you with a few questions to the address of Ponte Pinelli before I have done with my translation.

I look eagerly to hear some more about the way of reckoning time. Cellini reckoned *usually* on the Venetian system—from sundown onward up to 24.

But I believe there were other methods of computation present at the same moment often to his mind.

I will write again soon on more general topics.

184.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Nov.* 24.

I have been hard at work writing an Introduction to "Cellini." It is always difficult, I find, to deal with matter into which I have been living. Close familiarity makes me lose the right touch on the public. Anyhow, this portion of my work is finished, and I have now the notes and revision in front of me.

I sent the volume of your Venetian Almanac (a very interesting book) back registered. I fear it was a couple of days delayed, since I would not have it committed to the post except by one of my own family.

I am stupid—having spent three days in tobogganing up and down vale in various directions with Margot Tennant, introducing her also into *Wirthschaften* where the peasants smoke and drink—and where she drank and smoked. She is a mad girl, with a pocketful of familiar letters from Gladstone, Tennyson, and Mat. Arnold.

185.—To H. F. B. (fragment). *Davos, Jan.* 1. [1887.

. . . He is mentally very fit just now; but oddly anxious about health. He fell on his back, tobogganing, and got a bad headache; thought he had concussion of the brain; ate a huge dinner; and slept well; organized charades; sent for Ruedi, and sickened; then, on Ruedi's saying he was as sound as a fish, suddenly jumped up again into Jack-in-the-box activity—I think he will go far in life; and these sanitary panics signify little, if they can be set at rest by paying a doctor ten francs at Davos or one guinea in London.

I have made £475 by my pen in 1886. This is the most I ever made in one year, and I don't mean to work as hard again to get such miserable pittance.

I wonder whether you will come here. I mean to go, health permitting, into Vintschgau, in order to bring pecuniary succour to a friend at Schluderns. He wants about £20. But I cannot discover exactly why. I think it would be amusing to carry the cash, and, as I know there is no hotel there, to cut into the winter life of a Tyrolese village.

It is 11.30 p.m. and Graham is sitting by me, reading Dowden's "Shelley." I have still got the bells of last night in my ears, on the brink of a vast black, frozen chasm.* So good night.

Jan. 4. I have been knocked down by a bad and sudden cold. This letter was forgotten for three days. As I see there is no actual insanity in it, I send it for a token.

186.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Jan.* 19.

I am writing in bed, to which I have finally betaken myself after dragging out a miserable existence since the beginning of the month. I cannot imagine how or when I am to throw off this cold. Probably I shall have to go away for change of air. I only wish the prescription would be Venice and the "Mandragora." But that is not to be thought of. I fear that, until I see how things are going with me, my plans must be of necessity vague. And this has some bearing on the date of your visit. You mention the 25th. That would in ordinary circumstances suit very well. On the 26th we have fixed our International Toboggan race, and I ought to attend. But it may be desirable for my health

* In the church tower at Davos on Silvester Abend.

that I should avoid it. In which case, if I am at all fit to move, I may go and stay a while at Chur. There we could meet and come up together. But I am so prostrate now that I can foresee nothing. It does seem as though I could not be well, unless I had some hard piece of grind on.

I am interested about Sarpi's Monument. I agree with you that Venice is not meant for statues. Manin's is an abomination, and we can't hope for another Colleoni! Yet Sarpi ought to have his memorial. I hope it will be put in some great church—S. Zanipolo perhaps. But the Clerics will not allow that, I suppose. I will subscribe, and, if you like, will help to make the matter known in England. One ought to write to several newspapers; perhaps to get affiliated Committees up in Oxford and Cambridge.

I have been having several literary annoyances lately —one was a really unjust review in very spiteful tone of my "Sidney." This could have been answered, as I think, by a complete refutation. But I think on the whole it is better not to get into newspaper controversies about anything.

187.—To H. F. B. *Locarno, Feb.* 18.

I write to you from this unexpected place. Soon after you left us, I felt I could stand my nightmare cold no longer. Upon Ruedi's advice I came hither. He said I should find the Grand—got up for a winter season —English Chaplain and all the rest of it. I found the Grand' Albergo closed, no winter season thought of by the Locarnesi, and one fair hotel of the airy summer Italian-Lake sort ready to house me.

We left Thusis yesterday and slept at S. Bernardino. I have never seen an Alpine pass in winter so grimly

glorious—such vast masses of fallen snow—and such a terrible wind sweeping it up from every crag and cranny and whirling it down across the plains of Italy in drift. Through that drift we crossed the mountain. And that I do not speak at random I may quote the *padrone* here. I asked him if it had snowed in the last few days. He replied that it had not exactly snowed, but that the north wind had been deluging them with drift from the high Alps. I could not have conceived anything more extraordinary than our journey from Bernardino this morning, enveloped in whirling snow, plunging down pure trackless drifts into a great boiling chasm of vapour, which, when we got inside it, was a seething mass of frost spicules. This is a strange attempt at a cure for a cold. I suppose we shall scuttle back over the Gothard. But I cast a hungry eye at Venice—not so very far away—and your *mezzanino* which you speak of as open to my use. No; I feel it would be risking more than I ought, to come to Venice.

I had to-night a letter from that Belgian Professor Philippson about the Chapter in the Jesuit Constitutions.* I wrote to him and he has answered very kindly and fully—sticking staunchly to his guns and mine upon the interpretation of the passage.

Meanwhile I sent a letter to Father Parkinson, omitting my offer to cancel the allusion in my book, and demanding an explanation of the grammar of the chapter. To this I have received no answer. I feel now better prepared to fight the question out, if need be, which I would do by printing the original Latin and appealing to scholars of all sorts upon its obvious meaning.

* "Constitutions," Part VI. chap. 5. Controversy as to meaning of "obligatio ad peccatum." In June, 1887, Symonds sent to the *Fortnightly Review* "an apologetic note" which was hardly an apology.

188.—To H. F. B. *Davos, March* 10.

I wrote you a scrap three days ago. I have been and still am very ill—on the verge, says Ruedi, of a serious collapse. He recommends me to go off for two or three months' change, and suggests St. Leonards or Bournemouth! Can you fancy me in a lodging alone there, within reach of London and not able to enjoy my friends? No: I can't do that. My thoughts, on the other hand, turn toward Venice. Your letter of the 6th, which came to-day, says that your *mezzanino* is still vacant, though you speak as if Henry James might take it. I should be very sorry to stand in the way of a more useful tenant. But if you do not find one, I should like nothing at Venice equally. But I am in doubt as to how I should find myself with regard to housekeeping. I do not want to engage a cook, and I should not like to have to risk dining out in all weathers. I must add that Ruedi is against the idea of my going to Venice at all, and I have just had an invitation to join my old friend Lord Aberdare in the south of Italy, which might climatically be thought better for me.

189.—To H. F. B. *Davos, March* 15.

I am very much obliged to you for the telegram I got on Sunday anent the *mezzanino*. There is little doubt, I think, that when I am fit to travel, I shall come to Venice. I cannot say exactly when this may be. For I have been getting weaker since I last wrote to you, and the weather has suddenly turned off to winter.

Jowett writes *more suo* that I have reached "eminence"; but that now is the time to win a permanent place among the first writers of my generation, for which I have the "natural gifts," but which I

am still considerably far away from. His well-meaning exhortations reached me when I was half frantic with pain in the joints, wholly to bits in nerves, and terribly depressed by the sense of the difficulties under which I have to labour as an author at Davos. So I exploded a fantastic fire-work of words on this *tema:* "Damn success! *À bas la gloire! Vive la vie* under the ribs of Death, and in the prospect of fifteen millions of fame-annihilating years of human existence." I don't know how he will have liked it. But I am an old panting cab-horse; and can't bear to be flogged up the last hill with the prospect of most dubious bays to crown my carcass at the top.

190.—To H. F. B. *Wotton-under-Edge, July* 4.

You must have thought me very irresponsive to your letters; and I am truly ashamed of my remissness in writing. But it is as much as I can do to bear up against the great heat there is in England now. I have also to write at least ten letters a day about plans, engagements, and business. Everybody I know or don't know wants me to come to them, and I have to keep saying "No!" or fitting things in. *E.g.* a note yesterday from Lord Ronald Gower, whom I never saw, and only this: "Do come at 11 to-morrow morning." Then the printers have been rushing "Cellini" through the press. Each sheet of 16 pages costs me four hours to correct; for I find it needful to work through my translation with the Italian carefully again. So you will I hope understand why I have drawn a large draft upon my friends' indulgence. So far as health goes I have got on pretty well. But I am so thin and sleepless from heat that I feel it risky to stay much longer.

I am sorry to hear that you cannot go to Newhall

this summer. Everybody seems to be getting poorer. I have been trying to sell my three Clifton houses, and cannot get a decent price: and every bond I renew is reduced in interest. So grumbling is my portion also. But I have always so arranged expenditure that I do not feel reduction of income as much as those who live up to theirs.

I spent a day at Bournemouth with the Stevensons. He has gone downhill terribly. They are all off to Colorado next month. I expect his father's death will have made his circumstances easier. But he is still nervous about money. "Dr. Jekyll" has been worth £350 to him, he says. I should have thought he would have got more for it.

191.—To H. F. B. *Davos, July* 31.

I wish you had sent me Creighton's letter of which you speak in yours of the 26th. I should like to see *how* he is disappointed about the reception of his book. From no motive of vulgar curiosity, I think, but partly from sympathy and fellow feeling, partly from a wish to understand the attitude which a solitary worker, conscious of having done his best, must assume against the blank indifference of the world. I have suffered from the sense of irresponsiveness, and have done my utmost to steel myself against it from the first, having had a pretty clear prevision of how it must be. But no sensitive personality can ever attain the point to which he aims of self-preservative cynicism. We are destined to feel that our wings are beaten and broken against iron bars. We all go through it, who do disinterested work. Creighton is, professionally speaking, well paid with a good professorship, and what I should like to observe in him is whether *that* seems nothing, whether he does not

crave for the response of spirit to his spirit; never to be got. Let us be like Jenny Lind, who told me she sang not to the people but to God.

192.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Sept.* 9.

From your mother's and your own letters I see that I can safely address you now in Venice. I hope the Piave has not carried you away from Mr. Malcolm's. If it has been raining on the watershed of that river as it is now raining on that of the Rhine, you must have been in peril of flood. There is the usual wintry weather of early September here, which will, I suppose, be succeeded by a tranquil brilliant autumn—the weeks in which the high Alps are at their best in all respects, and especially in colouring.

I have almost entirely abandoned the hope of seeing Venice this year. I feel, as you do, that it is preternaturally long—longer than mere lapse of days implies, since we were together. It is not the same whether we meet there or here; and, for the twining of life in common, I wanted a turn at Venice. I do not believe that this sense of distance and lapse of time means any sort of refrigeration. But I do think it means a settling down to different ways of thinking and living: an amount of daily labour and of hourly experience, which, as individuals become less plastic through development, has heavier effect upon them.

I thoroughly sympathized with your feelings at finding that extract in the *P.M.G.* from Stevenson's poems.* Odd man, if he never sent you such a pretty symbol! A copy reached me here, of his book. He meant to send me one, I know—for I saw him at Bournemouth in June. But I wonder whether it was not meant for you—

* "Underwoods."

through me. I have lost the wrapper, which, as so many books reach me by the post, I stripped off at once. If you have got a copy you must consider it his gift anyhow, for I am sure he meant to send you the book. But he was very ill before he left England for America. Mrs. Stevenson wrote to me on their last day in London with really heavy accents of discouragement about their journeys, and my heart has often throbbed in imitation of the screw which was propelling them across the Atlantic. Now, I suppose, for better or for worse, they have arrived and are gone up country towards Colorado.

I work on at my Essays upon art and criticism. Gradually they are accumulating. I do not think they will make "a book." But they are going to have a lot of my life-thoughts in them. The odd thing is that one has so little to say upon subjects which have occupied a life-time. I often find that what I wrote between twenty and twenty-five is no shallower than what I can arrive at now.

The night has fallen gloomily over this valley, and I am not the cheerfullest of souls in its narrow compass.

193.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Oct.* 26.

Madge and I arrived here on Monday evening. We had a fairly pleasant journey, sleeping well in those cubicles over the Gothard, and getting to Landquart on Sunday. We found the road from Klosters to Davos on half its length tobogganable. Some snow has fallen and will last I think. The cold last night was severe: 5° Fahr. —27 degrees of frost.

I am very glad to learn from your letter that you enjoyed our visit to you—I will not say as much as we did, for that would be rating your enjoyment as high as ours was.

I have just sent off a telegram to you. "Sì. Letter."

I could not do so before. It took some time to turn the question of the *mezzanino* over in all its aspects. We all of us have a hankering after it. But we all feel that it commits us to a certain line of action—removes us to some extent from England—ties our hands in some degree from making exploratory journeys into other parts of Italy. For myself the latter consideration is not of much importance; I am old enough and have seen enough to know that I like going to Venice and slipping into accustomed ways there. But I feel that for Madge's education it may be somewhat limiting. Then there is the question of Lotta to be considered. We can decide on nothing without thought for Lotta. However, the upshot of the whole debate is that we should like to take the *mezzanino*, provided you will alter the arrangement of the kitchen by putting it on the basement. I have little doubt that, provided we agree upon the detail, and provided I do not become a poor man, we shall all be delighted to know we have a home in Venice.

I am going to send you Roger North's "Life." We are disgusted with the binding—a coronet out of place—and the father's coat wrongly displayed; for Roger's mother was an heiress of Montagu, and if her arms were to be used, they ought to have appeared in a scutcheon of pretence. Otherwise the book is good. I have slipped into it a pedigree of North (leaving out the Earls of Guilford).

To Sir Henry Layard I am about to send my "Cellini." The book pleases me; and I regard my part in it with modest satisfaction. It has been already well reviewed in the *Scotsman* and *Spectator*.

194.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov.* 15.

I have been lecturing to-day to 200 people in the Konversations-Saal of the Kurhaus. This is a new

experience for me at Davos. It went off well enough. I talked to the people about Davos in the Middle Ages, using the old Landbuch, or Digest of Common-Law, date 1598, which illustrates the manners of the place. The Trustees of the English Library asked me to give the lecture for the benefit of the Institution, and I suppose I have put about £10 in their pockets.

I do nothing else but write now. The weather is too dreadful. Next to London in November, I suppose Davos is the worst place on earth, in November, I have ever lived in.

Nov. 17.

The weather changed after I had written the beginning of this letter, and we have had two fine days. Yesterday I spent in exploring my wood upon the Seehorn with the forester. We marked thirty big pines to fell this winter, which ought to give me firewood for two years. It was a very pleasant excursion. Wading in snow above our knees, among the broken rocks and fir-roots and alpen-rose plants, from the Lake-basin to the top of the Seehorn,—tapping the trees and settling which were fit to keep and which were ripe for felling. I suppose we crawled over about a twentieth part of the wood, but got enough for my purpose. I spend about £100 a year on firing now. If I can get these trees economically cut, sawn, carried and split, I shall save something next year.

To-day has been spent in tobogganing. They have made a fine new road from Clavadel to the Landwasser, about a mile in length, on the shady side of the valley. There is plenty of snow there in good condition. It makes a fine run.

195.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov.* 15.

I was pleased to read what Creighton said about my "Cellini," and thank you for sending me those words. This book has been uniformly well reviewed, and Nimmo tells me that all the copies will have been sold by the end of this month. He only allowed me two copies; else I would have sent you one. But I was obliged to buy three for necessary presentation and I really cannot afford 36*s.* over and over again. Besides, you don't need an English translation of Cellini.

Nimmo proposes that I should translate Gozzi's "Life." Do you know anything of Gozzi? I fancy it would be a pleasant book to do. I do not think it very much matters not having very many reviews of your book. There was a spiteful little notice in the *Athenæum*. You will probably have seen it. But as it may miss you, I send it. What is said about Carmagnola at Arbedo may be worth your notice. Publishers say that reviews make little difference to books. I dare say that is true in the case of a book like "Cellini." But I agree with you in thinking that a book like your "Essays" must be affected by the number and frequency of reviews.

196.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Dec.* 21.

The "Introduction to Boccaccio," which prevented me last time from writing you a proper letter, and which you say you had not heard of, is now over. It was an Essay on Boccaccio as man and author (like my Prefatory Essay on Cellini), intended to go before a new translation of the "Decameron" which Vitzetelly is bringing out. He proposed to pay me £35, which is nearly a year's rent of your *mezzanino* by the way, and I agreed to do it. But I had to get it out of hand in time to begin Gozzi.

Thank you very much for the information you have already sent me about Gozzi. I will not trouble you to copy Cicognara; when I come to Venice you will show me what he says. The great difficulty is to get a copy of the "Memorie Inutili." I feel rather indignant with myself for going in for lucrative literature, as I am doing. I should not have thought of Cellini except for the £210, or of Boccaccio except for the £35, or of Gozzi except for the £210 to come. But my choice has been deliberate; and I do my work as well as I can. By the way, a second edition of Cellini is called for; and I am going to make alterations in the Introduction at two points to which you called my attention.

Miss Tennant spent a fortnight here; very pleasant it was. She is a wonderful companion. I have never seen a woman like her. And she corresponds with all sorts of people. Letters are always coming from Gladstone, Jowett, the Prince of Wales, Arthur Balfour, Lords Rosebery, Granville, and Pembroke, the Lytteltons, and innumerable ladies of society, all of which have things of interest in them. She keeps her friends up to her mark.

197.—To H. F. B. *Davos, March* 17. [1888.

You must think I have not received your letter or that I am very unmindful of your kindness. Neither is the case. Your last letter came when I was upon another "snow-tour," and I found it on my arrival here.

I had the experience of driving in an open sledge from Landquart while it was snowing incessantly—thick wet snow. All my outer garments were soaking. But as soon as we reached Laret, all the wet things began to freeze, and, when I got to Dörfli, I was as it were enclosed in a panoply of ice.

I am rather sorry that you missed this winter at Davos.

I wish you could be here now. I have never seen anything in the Alps which impressed me so strongly with the force—the cruel, blind force of nature. Of course the impression deepens into tragedy in the Züge. That gorge is really sublime in its ruin, its awful danger, its abandonment to the havoc of desolating accidents. Millions of tons of snow, forest, rocks, which have swept on both sides from 3000 ft. above, are lying huddled up together there. A horse can just get across the frozen deluge, climbing and descending, climbing and descending on a narrow track delved by the road makers. Here there is a tunnel 30 ft. below the upper surface of an avalanche; there the marble walls, where excavation has been made, rise fifteen feet above our heads; and always rocks rolling down with a sullen roar.

198.—To H. F. B. *Davos, July* 17.

I finished the translation of Gozzi yesterday. I am rather surprised at the fact; for I find that the whole memoirs will be about 150 pp. less than Cellini's. That is a bulky book. And, except for the lazy time at Venice, I have only been working five weeks. I am afraid there is no chance of my coming to Schluderns before you leave. Do not overwork yourself. Your hours look formidable to me. But mine might look worse to you. When I am hard at it, I do work as follows:

9 a.m.	12.30
1.30 p.m.	3.0
8 p.m.	1 a.m.

I go to bed very tired. But I hope not to continue these bad habits. It is the vice of ageing people to throw their labour on the night.

When I began this I meant to write you a letter.

But I have not done so. My brains have become mechanic things.

199.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Aug.* 25.

I am looking forward greatly to your visit, and am happy to think that we shall neither of us be overburdened with our work. Gozzi is practically finished. Jowett and Prof. Sellar and Miss Poynter are staying with us, and we are hoping for a visit from Sir Robert Morier. I don't know him, but he is a great friend of Jowett's, who always brings friends about him. Jowett is much better than he was last year, and is still grinding away at Plato. We are doing the "Symposium" together. I take the Greek and he reads out the English. I find a good many mistakes or misses of *nuance*, which is rather absurd. But the whole effect of the English is very good—peculiar to Jowett—governed by a delicate sense of the fitting, *il decoro*, in language.

All my girls have taken to riding. I rode with Madge to Klosters yesterday, and found it not as tedious as I expected, going down and up that long hill; one certainly enjoys scenery on horseback. I have a good mind to ride to Brescia in the autumn *en route* for Venice. One could do it in five days, I think, from here.

200.—To H. S. *Davos, Sept.* 3.

I do not know of any treatise on the relation of Art to Morality which treats the topic lucidly and fully. There are good things in one of Ruskin's Oxford Lectures, and of course all Ruskin's works are penetrated with his peculiar views about it. I should much like to see your remarks on this subject, since I have had the audacity to write an Essay on "The Relations of Art to Science and Morality" for my forthcoming book. Naturally,

while engaged on this, I looked about for accessible dissertations on the theme, and read a good deal "about it and about." But I found little that was helpful. I confined myself to defining the limits of the inquiry, and putting as clearly as I could what seemed to me the common-sense view of the matter.

Things have been going pretty well with me—"speaking κατ' ἄνθ." I have finished my long work on Carlo Gozzi, which is ready for the press as soon as the publisher likes to send it there. And now I am going back to the Essays *de omnibus rebus*, fifteen of which were written six months ago.

We are all well, and all together here, enjoying occasional visits from touring friends. Jowett stayed ten days, and I worked about three hours each evening with him at the translation of the "Symposium."

201.—Diary. *Venice, Oct.* 30.

Dinner at the Curtises', Palazzo Barbaro. Robert Browning and his sister. Browning, who is a Unionist, talked about the Parnell letters. He was dining at the same table with Buckle, editor of the *Times*, and Buckle was explaining his own views about them. Browning wanted to listen; but a man kept talking to him on the subject, why there is such a dearth of young poets. "You must ask God, who made them; I don't know," said Browning.

Browning told a good story about himself and a Chinese ambassador in London, who had been an Executioner (High Sheriff?) and was one of the best poets of the Empire. Speaking through an interpreter, Browning asked him what sort of poems he had chiefly written. He answered: "My poems are mostly enigmatical." "Then," said Browning, "we are brothers." By

"enigmatical" the Chinaman meant allegorical or symbolical.

Browning talked about metres. He thinks there are four controlling beats in all verses; illustrated this by hexameters, Shaksperian blank-verse, Æschylæan iambics. The metrical stave, independent of its scansion and also of its rhetorical effect, is gathered up, for him, into four groups marked by four beats. I don't know whether this will really work. Monumental verse, like Milton's, he seemed to exclude. He noticed rhymes, double rhymes, as tolerably frequent in the "Iliad." Said he read the "Iliad" once a year, and could point to more than twenty of these instances. Were they intended or signs of neglect?

Browning read "A Grammarian's Funeral," "Andrea del Sarto," and "Donald" gladly. Liked reading. Emphasized the dramatic values, but always in a low key, bringing out the prose-aspect — or rather the fact-aspect—of each piece. It was a lesson as to his intention, a rebuke to declamatory reading of his poems, an illumination of the asides and parentheses and reserved indications in his style—these to be indidicated by brief, pregnant modulations of voice, with something of a rasp in it.

Said he had burned the greater part of the letters he wrote to his family, a great mass of letters covering all his past life, which had fallen into his hands. Did not know what to do with his wife's letters; could not destroy them, would not let anybody have them. Once permitted Horne to publish some, because these were written to Horne before he (Browning) knew his wife, because Horne wanted to sell them for money, and because he (Browning) would not take a money equivalent. Mrs. Browning carried on her conversation with men of parts by correspondence mostly. Said he conceived the

"Grammarian's Funeral" at Ancona. Graphically described the bells bursting out as he sat on the top of the hill there.

Venice, Nov. 1.

Dinner at Mrs. Bronson's.

Browning has a well-used pocket "Iliad," at the end of which he has jotted down in pencil notes of the rhymes, notes of the striking pictures in Homer, and records of the dates and places of his reading Homer —Grande Chartreuse, etc. Browning showed me the passages in the "Iliad" where he thinks that rhymes were intended. Only a certain number, perhaps seven in all. Of these there were rhymes in *-οιο*—two of these rhyming on *Διὸς αἰγίοχοιο*. A remarkable set of rhymes on *-ηκεν*. But it did not seem to me to prove more than accident, the reiteration of vowel sounds in Greek inflection, and perhaps an occasional freak. A great many of the instances were only assonances, and some references yielded no results. If rhyme had been *sought* by the Greek ear at that time, why was it so sparingly employed? Hearers of the rhapsodies must have waited hours before their ear was gratified by a rhyme, and then perhaps once in a whole day.

Story of Gladstone.—Gladstone maintained to Browning that the Greeks in Homer's time did not *ride* their horses. Browning appealed to a passage in the theft of Rhesus' horses to show that the car could be flung upon a man's neck, when he backed a steed and rode away with him. Curious instance of Gladstone's reasoning. Supposing Homer never spoke of riding a horse (which Browning's passage disproves) this is no reason for concluding that riding did not come before driving, and yet Gladstone puts the cart before the horse thus—just as in the case of colours.

Story of Colvin.—Colvin argued that the Apollo Belvedere is not shooting his bow, but hanging out the *ægis*. Browning tried to demonstrate that the *ægis* required two hands and arms to shake it out.

Euripides.—Swinburne's rhyme about "Euripides" and "insipid ease," stolen from Browning—"Pheidippides" and "insipid ease," in "Aristophanes' Apology." The eagle Browning shot with an arrow feathered from his own wing. Browning insisted on a point in "Heracles Furens" (to maintain the greatness of Euripides) when Heracles brings Theseus back from Hades and shows emotion over the dead children. Theseus chaffs him for his feeling, and Heracles asks, "How did you feel in Hades when I took you out?" "I was in a blue funk," says Theseus. This Browning quoted as a fine Shaksperian touch.

Italian travel.—Radicofani and the neglected Lucca della Robbias—Fano and the Domenichino—Castel Fiorentino and the dried mummy of a man built into the Church wall there, built in alive—whether to obey the old superstition about his spirit defending the place, or because he suffered there the sentence *in pace*.

Browning was very sympathetic and human. I felt that his Homeric rhymes were a sort of freak, not to be maintained. What I felt most was the persistent tenacious force of the man, the grip upon his perceptions, which makes him treat impressions seriously, and enables him to convert them into poems.

We talked about the disadvantage of knowing too much about a subject which has to be treated poetically. Criticism whittles creativeness away. This was conceded by one of the most learned and, in some senses, critical of poets.

Browning's theory of translation. Ought to be absolutely literal, with exact rendering of words, and

words placed in the order of the original. Only a version of this sort gives any real insight into the original. Fitzgerald's "Omar Khayyam" a fine English poem, but no translation. Sir Alfred Lyall is going to retranslate the "Rubaiyat."

(This was at the Princess of Montenegro's.)

Venice, Nov. 8.

Dined at Sir Henry Layard's with Catherine, the Curtises, Browns, an American Mr. Howe, two Miss Ducanes, and a Miss de Bunsen, daughter of George de Bunsen. I took in Miss de Bunsen and talked about music, mostly Wagner, all dinner-time. Not profitable.

After dinner Browning came. Had a long talk with him about the treatment of stories in drama. The great thing is to penetrate the tale and squeeze out the whole truth and virtue—not to invent and add imaginative elements. This began with the name of the Palazzo Dario, Lorenzino's use of the name Dario, etc. I promised to show Browning the place of Lorenzino's murder at Campo S. Polo. From Lorenzino we passed to the treatment of such stories in poetry—Alfred de Musset's "Lorenzaccio"—Shelley's "Cenci"—his own "Ring and the Book." The "Ring and the Book" is merely a faithful reproduction of the MS. (which Browning means to leave to Balliol), worked out with imaginative effort to seize the real virtue of each part. Curiously enough, he has lately had given him a print of Count Guido going to execution in a "*barrocino*," and with a worn hang-dog look. Told me the story of the Santa Croce parricide. When young Santa Croce determined to murder his mother, he wrote to a relative falsely accusing her of immorality and being pregnant, asking the relative's advice what to do. Reply: "Act as a gentleman should under the circumstances." For

which reply the relative was imprisoned and bothered for several years to confess what he really meant by the laconic words. When at last he said, "Of course, I meant, kill her," he was decapitated as an accessory to matricide.

Browning's theory of the way to treat these tales of historic crime corresponds closely with the method of Webster and Shakspeare. It repudiates the French and German way of adding a passion-motive and making the play go by means extraneous to the story. One must remember, however, that the play-to-be-acted has exigencies which the play-to-be-read, or the specific Browningian Dramatic Poem, does not exert. Squire, who is always seeking the book of a bouncing opera, stumbled over the Duchess de Palliano because he could not finish the 5th Act. Life leaves the destinies of men and women at a loose end. Art requires, or seems to require, and does, I think, indeed require upon the stage, that these human destinies should not be left ragged. Hamlet has to die, giving a death-blow—and not to survive the night—else we should be thinking how he and Laertes talked to their valets and drank their coffee in the morning. The tenor of "I Puritani" has to sing his lungs out with the *prima donna*, expecting death, and at the last to be married—in order that the nuptial couch may fill our minds when the curtain drops, and the last trombone has wheezed his hollow note out. The tomb and the bed seem indeed the only conclusions possible to a drama. Browning's method of dramatic narrative and psychological revivification avoids such tame conclusions. It is nicely invented to suit the imaginative conditions under which a poet who respects his subject, and who lives in sympathy with scientific history, can now work with satisfaction. Art becomes ancillary to science, to history, to fact, in this age. The artist

dares not distort events and invent machinery. Query: whether art does not gain? Cerebration increases. It is easy to invent puppets and distort facts. It is difficult to penetrate real persons and to exhibit things.

202.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Jan.* 26. [1889.

Another long fit of silence. I have ever since the beginning of the month been taken up with bothers and rows about the International Toboggan race. It has been really dreadful this year, the state of trivial squabbles our mixed society has got into. At last I retired from the Committee of Management of which I was President, having, however, got the race itself run successfully. The first prize was won by a young American, on a peculiar sledge which rendered competition impossible. Minsch and an Englishman tied for the second prize, and Freeman came fourth. If I were not too sick of the whole thing to write you the details of our quarrels I think they would amuse you.

I don't know whether you will have seen my review of Roden's poem in the *Academy*. He seems wild with delight about it. I was quite sincere when I wrote it, and yet I feel a great bewilderment as to his actual merits. This poem of his exactly hit the mood I was in and echoed my own despondency.

A book by Richard Garnett, "The Twilight of the Gods," would interest you. Stephen brought it me. I also think you might find Whitman's "November Days" worth reading. I cannot work much at my Essays. But I have recently rewritten one on "Democratic Art," which is about Whitman to a large extent.

Visitors and local quarrels and the pleasant society of many Swiss comrades distract me from literature. However, they also distract me from my own attendant ever-watchful spectres of the mind.

We have one pageant of splendid skies by day and night. Since October 11 there have been only four or five clouded days. My tenant, old Hans Ammann, tells me he cannot remember a winter with so little snow.

Jowett wrote me a most interesting letter from Faringford, where he was staying with the dying Tennyson.

203.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Feb.* 16.

I must write, lest you should think I am more actually dead than I really am. Time has become for me a category of no value whatsoever. Perhaps it is a form of insanity, to gain in this life a relative conception of life in the eternities. I have been writing, with immense toil and grief, four Essays upon "Style." If I dare talk of having manners, these Essays are certainly in my fourth manner, and will be simply atrocious when they appear in print. I don't know what devil has got possession of my own style, and dried its wells up.

204.—To H. S. *Davos, March* 10.

On the receipt of your note, gently chiding me for silence, I sat down and wrote you a very elaborate letter about myself. I think it, however, almost wiser not to send this, for it would cause you anxiety, and you cannot help me by being informed of my mental troubles.

Briefly, I have been seriously amiss in my brain during the last four months, and am beginning to perceive that the constant literary work, with which I am accustomed to keep my mental maladies at bay, has its evil side as overtaxing the cerebral energy and increasing the nervous susceptibility. My distress has been very great, and my uneasiness about the future is sometimes

almost more than I can bear. This is enough to explain, in part at least, why I hold myself aloof from correspondence. I never could write formal letters.

Did you see a review I wrote of Roden's book? It is rather high-pitched. But I was resolved to say out once what I thought about him. I admire his "Modern Faust," with all its faults of form, immensely. The intense sympathy for, and intuition into mental and moral anguish, which it displays, vibrates through every chord of my own tormented being. Perhaps this adaptation to my special circumstances rendered me a little too enthusiastic. Still, it is a merit in a poem of that sort to have fitted on to a sufferer's mood. I do not feel the same about Thomson's or even Leopardi's pessimism—and am superbly scornful over the weak modern German pessimism which seems to me begotten of *Byronismus und Bier*.

Have you read an Essay called "Accent and Rhythm" Pt. 1 (no author's name), published by Blackwood? You are one of the very few people it would interest. I do not see how the man's laws are to be applied to classical metres. But they suggest a clue which I have always been fumbling after with regard to English blank verse.

I sent you two photos of my study here. I had to sit four minutes for the one in which I appear. The result is not very luminous. I wish I could talk to you instead of writing. I have, however, had some pleasant visits from friends lately, and expect another on Wednesday next.

205.—To H. F. B. *Salò, April* 20.

Many thanks for your letter, which gives such a bright account of the girls. I wish I had not missed

Margot. But cannot help it. She is, as I told you, a very remarkable young woman. I dare say she rather raised the hair of some people. But she is really good. I can fancy the meeting of the three girls in the Campiello which you describe so graphically.

We have had a good journey so far on the whole—travelling entirely with horses, except for the trifling bits between Chiavenna and Sondrio, Iseo and Brescia. We had snow on the Aprica, rain in Val Camonica, for the rest, good weather.

I had a very heavy fall in the icy tunnel on the Fluela, by which I lost that bunch of gold rings I carried on my watch-chain, and did some injury to my back. This has made the constant driving less enjoyable than it would have been, and less of a rest to my nerves; for I have been always in pain of a dull and disagreeable sort.

I found in a deserted church at Sondrio, high up above the town, a most extraordinary series of *graffiti*. I never saw anything like them: very literary, and written in an odd stiff way as though a dead language were being used. One was pretty:

> "Chi ama molto, riamato,
> Gli verrà molto perdonato."

This Salò is a fascinating place. But it has the trail of the slug over it, in the shape of sundry German invalids. A very good inn, and lovely views. We hope to reach Venice about the 27th, *viâ* Rovereto, Schio, Bassano, and, perhaps, Asolo.

206.—To H. S. *Venice, May* 12.

Owing to frequent changes of place during a prolonged journey from Davos to Venice (driving most of the way), some of my correspondence has been delayed.

I have been four weeks away from Davos now, and I find the variety of life here, as contrasted with its monotony there, very soothing to my nerves. When I last wrote to you I was in a very morbid state. Things are not, I believe, much improved with me essentially. But it is a relief to find distraction. The people of Venice—Italians, English residents and visitors and some Americans—amuse me greatly. The mixed society of the place goes far to realize the ideal of an urbane and unprejudiced *Kleinstädterei*. Royal princesses and Bourbons, descendants of Doges and occupants of those vast palaces which line the Grand Canal, mingle freely with artists, advocates, journalists. If there were less gossip and rather more intellectual interest, the social atmosphere would be charming.

It is difficult to *know* Italians. I doubt, indeed, whether we really know or understand any people of a foreign race. But they admit one with charming readiness into the outer court of their familiarity; and I am at home now in several houses, both here and in the country, where I can study the last relics of Venetian aristocracy. Their apparent simplicity and real ignorance are quite delightful. There is one young gentleman who combines in his single person the blood of the Pesaros, Gradenigos, Donàs and Zons—houses which were illustrious in the times of Frederick Barbarossa and whose splendid architectural monuments stud the plains of Lombardy from the Friulian Alps to the Po—who has not the faintest tincture of historical knowledge, and who cannot recognize the arms he quarters when he sees them on the façade of the Ducal Palace, the gates of tributary cities, the palaces of Sansovino and the canvases of Titian. I have spent the last year in studying Venetian decadence (1720–1815) and translating a very rare autobiography by a Venetian nobleman whose

life covered that period. So you can understand that it interests me to meet with the survivals from that age, who continue to some extent the habits of their ancestors under the altered conditions of *Italia unita*.

The way these people muddle away their fortunes—sometimes very considerable fortunes—without magnificent expenditure, without conspicuous vices, without ruinous tastes, is beyond belief or comprehension. A certain Marquis who owned a villa with a spacious park in the neighbourhood of a rising town on the mainland, recently sold it, at the rate of 25 francs the square metre, to a building company. His eldest son, not without his father's connivance, is employing a fortune he inherited from an uncle in repurchasing the land from the same company at the absurd rate of 200 francs the square metre. Such *naïvetés* seem impossible, but they verify what we read about Venetian folly in the memoirs of the 18th century.

A gentleman told me that his great-grandfather was the last High Admiral of the Republic of San Marco. He had his table laid every day for forty guests, whether he expected company or not. He was particular about the decoration of the board, and very capricious in his taste. At the same time he would not give his majordomo any direct instructions. The custom of the house was to prepare the dining-room some hours before dinner. The Admiral walked in, and if he observed anything which displeased his eye, he twitched the cloth with all its plate, glass and china off the table and left everything in a smash on the floor. This man was in no way notable for eccentricity.

These things will not interest you, however, and if I let my pen flow on, I should fill volumes with maundering ancedotes.

207.—Diary. *Venice, April 26.*

Nimmo writes to say that he cannot venture on publishing the love-stories in Gozzi's "Memoirs," and that he agrees with me about the impossibility of leaving them out. In this case he wants me to consent to a "privately printed" edition. He says that the Vigilance Society is prosecuting two publishers for translations which it thinks improper. I have replied to Nimmo that I will not evade the peril of prosecution by "privately printing," the result of which would be to throw the whole odium and responsibility of Gozzi upon me. I did not start the notion of this work, and I do not regard Gozzi as a necessity for English literature.

At 5 p.m. I called on Mme. Pisani. Found her very well, and had an interesting conversation about Italian character. Her theory is that the Italians are all *épuisés. Seccati seccanti seccatori.* They hate intellect, and are insincere in their intelligence. English people idealize them in a gross way. I think there is a great deal to be said for this theory. At the close of the Renaissance, just before the Council of Trent, Central Italy and Lombardy (excepting Piedmont) were played out. But the kingdom of Naples, which took little part in the Revival of Learning and Art, was coming on. This source of intellectual vigour the Catholic reaction checked. And it is singular that the most vital Italians of the present moment, those who seem really to care for and grasp thought, are Southerners—De Sanctis, Villari, Settembrini, many politicians of the *Camera*; while everybody knows that the liberation of Italy was due to the statesmanship and military energy and stubborn will of the Piedmontese. This, if anything more than a mare's nest, illustrates my theory of evolution in mental organisms.

From Mme. Pisani's we went to dine at Quadri's. The town band was playing just underneath our windows, very well on the whole, though they tried a *pot-pourri* from "Lohengrin" which was not successful. Without strings, Wagner's music shows its absolute dependence on instrumental coloration for effect.

After waiting about for an hour in the damp evening, we met B. and the girls on their way to the Capello Nero. Here were sixty men and women from Toynbee Hall assembled under their leaders — four or five enthusiastic and benevolent young men, and a deaf old female chaperone. B. gave them a lecture on the Lagoons and their influence over the growth and character of Venice. It held their attention, though they looked very sleepy after a long day's sight-seeing in the dismal *scirocco*, and had just risen from a copious meal. Composed of London teachers, clerks, and overseers in houses of business, and people who work hard for their bread, the audience struck me by its high average of physique, intelligence, firm will, personal self-respect, marked individuality, and good dress. A very noticeable group of men and women, creditable to England, expressive of English force and grit. The women I thought superior in appearance to the men. The evening was extremely interesting.

April 27.

In the afternoon went to the Lido. The wood by the Favorita quite snowy with the largest Stars of Bethlehem I have ever seen—an odd dead white but beautiful flower. On the rough grassland between the dunes and the Jews' Cemetery we found a group of wild cherry trees in bloom, hummed over by bees and great black flies. The sky above was bright blue. An

exquisite but hardly paintable spring landscape, this wonderful flower-wealthy tree gnarled and twisted by the sea-winds, flourishing healthily and exuberantly blossoming there upon the sparse turf of the sandy dunes within sight of the deep blue sea and many-coloured sails.

Dined well at the Cittâ di Firenze. Bill for C. and me: lire 4.80.

208.—To H. F. B. *Davos, June* 23.

The "Soldiers Three" has arrived. I mean to get more of this man's books—and perhaps to write to him. I cannot quite understand the Envoy. When first I read it I *felt* the lover in it; and then I got confused because it seemed to be the artist in a mysteriously religious mood. It is singularly touching—especially these lines,

> "Because I wrought them for Thy sake,
> And breathed in them mine agonies."

What does that mean with reference to so humorous and remarkably realistic a sketch of character?

Have you seen "Looking Back," an attempt to state, in semi-novel form, what American Society will be like after the institution of Socialism? It is worth getting.

I suppose you have heard little about the shameful way in which Germany is bullying Switzerland. I am, of course, in the thick of the talk. In the last Diplomatic Note the Germans say that unless the Swiss alter their Constitution as they dictate, they will consider the advisability of *setting at naught her neutrality*—which can mean nothing else except going to war with a view to annexation. They have also actually proposed to set up a *German Police* inside Switzerland! The

odd thing is that both Russia and Austria are morally backing Germany up on the point of asylum rights.

"Gozzi" is expected to come out first week of October.

An Italian from Bassano is working in my garden now. He has such a typical face. Really looks as if he had come out of one of those ugly pictures of the Da Ponte family.

209.—To H. F. B. *Davos, July 4.*

I suppose you are at Schluderns or will be there soon.

I am in bed here, where I have been since last Saturday, when I sprained my right foot very badly. What happens if a slave in the centre of Africa meets with such an accident and has to go forward—or a soldier in the retreating column of a defeated army? The actual injury is so slight, and so completely disabling. After twenty-four hours of march the man's leg must swell so that he cannot walk and has to fall—and then, in the plenitude of vigour, death stares him in the face. This must have happened over and over again. We do not need legend to make us feel the atonement of sin through suffering. In some way or other this is going on every day.

But the point to which these reflections carry me, I will not dwell on now. For I am not firm enough of brain to grasp conclusions. In moments of weakness we often seem to be on the point of a discovery—a complex of thoughts ready to be solved in some higher and luminous synthesis. It is like the illusion of dreams which makes things so clear; but which have no logic when we wake from them.

I have not much to write about. Only to keep touch. So good-bye.

210.—To H. F. B. *Sidmouth, Sept.* 12.

We arrived here this afternoon. This is a very beautiful place; a large modern house set down in a cup of English hills, reminding me of the far narrower yet finer chalice of Val San Zibio.* It is all broad and smooth and sweeping here, in long, slow, undulating lines, broken at the extreme limit by the southern sea, and crested with tiny spaces of moor at the summit of the ridges. There are magnificent gardens such as only England can produce.

I read "Le Disciple" with much labour on the journey. I cannot understand Bourget's reputation as a man of *esprit.* He is so conscientiously and painfully laboured. It is like eating very acrid saw-dust. Of course I recognize the power with which he has interpreted *le crime lettéraire* and the *crime Chambige.* But he does not convince me of the reality of the situation, and leaves me with the feeling that the *jeune homme d'aujourdhui* is a confounded simpleton more than anything else. The philosopher is of course sheer absurdity. I like and admire de Maupassant much more. The more I read of him, the more I feel the feebleness of James' criticism. Before I knew de Maupassant, I thought James' Essay on him good. But like the Essay on Loti it is based on a real critical obtuseness of conception.

211.—To H. F. B. *Sidmouth, Sept.* 20.

I am still lingering on here in this lovely country, getting myself accustomed to the luxuries of life, but not exactly loving them.

Did I tell you Nimmo talked to me about your book (The Venetian Press)? He is going through with

* A villa belonging to Count Donà dalle Rose, in the Euganeans.

it, I can see. But he does not expect it to do more than just cover its expenses. I like the man. He has a real affection for the books which he has published.

I have bought a photographic machine called "Kodak." My nephew, Arthur Cave, gets excellent results from one he has; and I am inspired by his example. But I doubt whether I shall succeed as well as he does.

My wife writes that they have had 14° of frost already at Davos and her flowers are killed. It is madness to make gardens there. Here, though the autumn air is crisp, the flower-gardens are in gorgeous bloom, and the woods have yellowed—a herd of deer is slowly feeding across my line of vision on the hill-slope opposite, beyond a vast Persian carpet of zinnias, Japanese anemones, scarlet lobelias, etc.

212.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov.* 18.

It is good that you have Allen with you now. This will give you a great sense of security about your book. I have often wished, in similar circumstances, that I had some competent friend to look over my proof sheets.

I liked what I saw of Allen that day at Queen's very much indeed. Of course one cannot understand a man at one or two meetings. What struck me in him was an external air of scornfulness and boredom. But he became bright and friendly in conversation.

Frank Harris has bothered me into writing for the *Fortnightly* what he calls "A Page of My Life." I doubt whether he will print it, now that I have done so. This making a man interview himself, produce a "celebrity at home" on his own account, is a new departure in journalism which I do not much like.

I find it not very easy to settle down again to literary work after all that intellectual and social racket in

England. And yet I have a magnificent subject in Georg Jenatsch already half studied.

We have splendid autumn weather. I drove up the Fluela yesterday and found winter there in all its crystal purity.

I was just going to close this letter without thanking you for Sir A. Lyall's poems,* and telling you how much I enjoy what I have read of them. I took the book up and did not lay it down till I had gone through half. They lift you along. And the sympathy—two-sided, with the natives and the English in India—is very remarkable. The man is a real poet. When I was at Cambridge, Mrs. F. Myers (who is an admirable photographer) showed me a fine portrait she had made of him—a fine head.

Did I tell you of my making the acquaintance of Rudyard Kipling (the author of "Soldiers Three") in London? He turns out to be a nephew of Mrs. Burne-Jones—a very extraordinary young man. I wish I could have got to know him well. It seems to me that he is going to make a name in England. The Savile Club was all on the *qui vive* about him, when I lunched there once with Gosse. Rider Haggard appeared really aggrieved at a man with a double-barrelled name, odder than his own, coming up. Literally.

213.—To H. F. B. *Am Hof, Nov.* 19.

I am greatly interested by what you tell me about the Harlequin photographer. His saying that "Brighella" must remain "Brighella," etc., accords exactly with what I made out about the masks, and tried to express in my introductory Essays to Gozzi. It seems that the old *Commedia dell'arte* is living on, as everything does live on, in Italian customs. Probably some one in

* "Verses written in India."

Pompeii before the eruption would have shown the same book of *generici** and *doti*,† and described his art in the same way.

Parenthetically, I should much like to hear what the general effect produced on your mind by the reading of my "Gozzi" was. I don't want details; and I know you don't care about Venice at that period. I never did anything with less spontaneous sympathy, and with a greater sense of merely mechanical dexterity. The whole of the first edition has already been sold out. Nimmo is going to issue a second; and the price of the first is rising rapidly. This is the working of the "limited issue" system.

I cannot say that I agree with you about "The Master of Ballantrae." It has all Stevenson's power of style—but the story is decrepit—does not go on four legs. There is no reason assigned for the domination of that shadowy and monstrous person, the Master, over his family. The best thing in the book is the old steward's character. I regard the book as an inartistic performance; feeble in what it has been praised for—psychological analysis; silly in its episodes of pirates and Indians, which Stevenson does with a turn of the wrist and a large daub of blood. There is nothing in it so human as the disagreement between Alan Breck and David Balfour on the moor.

214.—To H. F. B. *Am Hof, Nov. 26.*

I quite agree with you about the boredom of Gozzi. Think how bored I must have been, boiling him down and trimming him up! "Not worth it" is the word.

* Commonplaces, fixed in form, which could be applied *ad libitum*.

† Passages not left to improvisation. See J. A. Symonds's "Carlo Gozzi," i. 62.

And I felt it all the while I was doing it. I am not in good trim; suffering again from trouble in my head.

215.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Dec.* 5.

I am relieved to find that the *P.M.G.* selects "A Page of My Life" as the most interesting article in the best magazine of the month. I really wondered whether people would stand it. But if they like such "pages," I can supply them with dozens at the rate of from £12 to £15 apiece. I almost think that I am getting considerable enough in literature, if God grants me a few more years and the consecration of old age, to say out a great many things which have been pent in me, and which I should like to tell my brothers before the breath is out of my body. Well, well. This is neither here nor there.

Old Walt Whitman sends me, with autograph and inscription in his shaky hand, the final and complete edition of his works—one book, a sort of Bible. It is a grand present to the spirit, and (for the future) of incalculable pecuniary value. I wish I could write about him. But I am so saturated with the man's positive electricity, so paralyzed by the negative, that I can come to no formula—sink and swim alternately in turn as in an ocean or an ether. The critic is nowhere, face to face with him. But, as you know, "Naufragar in questo mare," * etc. Now I must shut up.

216.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Jan.* 19. [1890.

This influenza is a very singular thing. It has left me all to bits. What I resent most is that my head is

* "E il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare." Leopardi "L'Infinito."

gone. I cannot write—literature I mean—and hardly a decent letter. And I cannot follow a difficult book. I tried Pater's "Appreciations" to-day, and found myself wandering about among the precious sentences, just as though I had lost myself in a sugar-cane plantation—the worse for being sweet.

I have not seen T. E. B.'s poems. I think I don't want to read any more poems. "Demeter" and "Asolando" both bored me beyond words. The fuss people make about art and books begins to annoy me in a way which is really stupid. I have no doubt it is my own fault. And I am chief of sinners, having written so much about books and art. But I know when I have had enough and have lost my joy in such things. The time seems to have come; and I am not going to be a hypocrite, and pretend that I care for what I regard as froth and bladders.

217.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Jan.* 21.

I have got your letter of the 19th with its continued bad news—of fog and lingering bronchitis. We are better off in many respects; for our sunshine has been all but uninterrupted for six weeks, and the frost by no means as hard as usual. I am also able to report a considerable advance towards health. My head, which suffered so severely from the influenza, is recovering a normal tone. Unfortunately, to balance these benefits, I sprained my ankle again the other day. I have cut thirty-four noble pine trees in my wood upon the Seehorn; and I went to see which I would keep for planks, and which I would saw up for fire-wood. Scrambling about upon the huge smooth stems coated with smooth snow and ice, I slipped—and have been three days lame with arnica bandages on.

The beauty of the scene in the wood, the purity of the air, the perfect stillness, the flooding sunlight, the solemn giants all around, and the men at work athletically hauling those unmanageable boles down chasms and ravines—all this was worth a sprain!

We have had our Toboggan Races at Klosters. Two days of two sorts of competition. The prizes on both days were divided between an American, S. Whitney, first in each event, and Swiss people. No English and no natives of any other nation touched them. Minsch was away. My friend Ammann came third in one race and second in the other, which pleased me. The Committee disqualified him because he was 1½ minutes late at the starting point. I do not think they were wrong.

I have had no proofs of either of my books since Dec. 17. When I look at the proofs of the "Essays" already here, I am almost glad that no more come. This is in many ways the most important book I have written for publication. They are printing it infamously with a typographical carelessness which makes one sick.

I am immersing myself in the mediæval history of Graubünden. It is a thorny subject. The chronicles are very defective; and the literary histories are written in absolutely sixth-rate style. The two eyes of mediæval history are pedigrees and geography. Both fail me. Of the baronial families who strove and expired here, I have only scattered names. What would I give for a Litta! Of their castles again I have only names. No maps exhibit them. It is dreary plodding. But I disentangle a great deal. And the work is not quite so feverish as a psychological autobiography. By the way, the house of Matsch was one of the four or five most eminent feudal families of Rhaetia. Not very old or brilliant nobility, but (like the house of Hapsburg) intensely acquisitive and tenacious.

It rose into eminence as a chief vassal of the See of Chur, held bailiwicks for the Bishop in all the Vintschgau, Engadine, Münsterthal, Bormio, Puschlav. One of my bothers is dealing with German feudal terms. The modern dictionaries do not help. And I doubt whether there are exact analogues, for all the several sorts of tenures, in English mediæval nomenclature.

You will observe that I have recovered tone after the last letter I wrote to you. I am reconciled to literature and study as *palliatives*. I do not believe in them as substantial factors in life. Only when I am in fairly good spirits do they amuse me and help me to pass the time.

218.—Diary. *Samaden, March* 29.

Catherine, Madge, Katharine, Rosa, and I left by the Fluela post on a fine, calm, very warm morning. We went in carriage to the Alpenrose, then in open sledges: ourselves the only passengers. Nothing happened till we crossed the mountain. Just above the Weger's house we met Minsch, coming up with his post from Süss. He pronounced the road open, though bad for travelling. A little way further, one of the horses of our train, drawing a luggage sledge, fell down and upset everything. This delayed us for about eight minutes. The heat was intense. One felt as though a burning-glass were being applied. Then we moved on, and when we came to what Christian Buol once called "die unheimliche Stelle" above the first gallery, we found that two large avalanches had fallen across the road. They must have just come down, by so small an interval of time sparing both the upward and the downward posts. The road was blocked for about 200 yards. Caught at any point in this line, all the post-sledges would certainly have been hurled down to the stream so far below.

The horses could not possibly cross this obstacle without a road being dug out for them; and the danger of falling stones was urgent. So the conductor asked me to go forward on foot, with my family, and to send back to him any men I met. We trudged onward as well as we could. It was at first toilsome enough to clamber over the freshly fallen snow-masses of the avalanches. Then we emerged upon the thawing post-road: a mass of ruts, and rivulets, and treacherous snow-ridges, through which we plunged, shuffled, and waded for an hour and a half; always in peril of the stones which kept falling from above, and of the avalanches which were ready to descend. The heat, meanwhile, was something extraordinary. Shortly before we reached the smaller gallery, I heard the roar of an avalanche, which I thought was falling on the other side of the valley. But when I came to the tunnels, it was clear that this third avalanche had just swept over it, and the stones were still falling from above. Well: at last, after sending back as many men as I could lay under contribution, we came to a rest just where the post changed again from sledge to carriage. There we sat and waited, drying our wet feet in the fierce sun, until at length our post came galloping down upon us—all safe, and all the luggage. At Süss we found that the Schulz post had waited for us; and we reached Samaden eventually, a good deal late.

The moon on the Bernina was magnificent.

Chiavenna, March 30.

Up at four and off at five. The first faint light of dawn on the Bernina was something indescribably lovely, in the pure soft transparent spring air, so finely touched and moulded every line and spire of that huge crystal. I never saw a lovelier morning, as the sun rose and we

worked our way up to Maloja. The Italian air and hues grew, as we went, in warmth, and Piz Badile, from Campfer onwards, beckoned us down to Bregaglia. At Chiavenna we broke away into the crocus-meadows, the sward covered with grape-hyacinth and snowflakes, the rocks tufted with primulas, and the dry upland districts of heaths and hypaticas.

March 31.

We are all of us burned in the face, roasted in brain and marrow by the experience of sun and snow during the last two days.

Catherine, Madge and I drove to the old villa of the Vertematte-Franchi family at Piuro. It is a singular specimen of an Italian noble country-house, fairly preserved, with its terraces and gardens. Inside, the frescoes are curious, and the wooden carved ceilings of the late cinquecento are superb. Two interesting oil pictures of Plurs: one with its streets, Piazza and palaces and the Maira flowing through it, before the mountain fell—the other, a rude one, of the lake which replaced this once flourishing town after the accident.

Venice, April 22.

Went alone to "Mefistofile," and sat in the stalls. I cannot speak about the Opera this first time of hearing it. It did not carry me off my legs. I felt its literary merits and its conscientious workmanship more than its power. The new reading of the Faust of Goethe is interesting. But Boito has packed too much together—Prologue in Heaven, Compact, Margaret, Blocksberg, Death of Margaret, Helen, Death of Faust. The whole is therefore like a large picture by Breughel; very miniature in its parts. The compression required in each part reduces the scale and precludes proper development

of motives. The climaxes are too frequent, and the changes of tone are too startling. In fact the whole thing seemed to me to want breadth of treatment. But it is full of beautiful *morceaux*, and is highly intellectual in conception, careful in execution,—music well fitted to the intention of each incident.

Venice, April 24.

C. and I dined at the H——s: only Miss Bronson and Marchese Sommi. It was a most unfortunate evening. This affected my spirits and brought up that fund of hesitating shyness which is hidden deep in me, which is the fundamental quality of my temperament. I could talk neither Italian nor French; and at last subsided into helpless silence; occasionally uttering feeble *gauche* remarks. I wonder what people can think of me! A man like Ernesto Masi, in the "Nuova Antologia," after studying my "Renaissance in Italy" and the translations of Cellini and Gozzi, tells them that "the Italian language has no secrets for Mr. Symonds," but when I try to speak Italian, they find I immediately come to the end of my resources. Then again, they see me frank, bold in argument at Mme. Pisani's or X——s; timid, uncomfortable, ill at ease, at a little dinner of six persons at their own house. Do they imagine, I wonder, that I am intentionally rude, or that I am subject to attacks of nervous illness, or that I have had some hideous quarrel with my wife, or that a terrible preoccupation is in my mind, or that I am unaccustomed to society and bored by it? I do not suppose they think much about me. Yet there must be something strange to even the most careless observer. The fact is simply and solely that I cannot use my knowledge of foreign languages for talking them; partly because I have no liking for grammar, and have never really

learned any grammar at all; partly because my knowledge has come through the eye for literary purposes, not through the ear and mouth for social purposes. As soon as I see a word or phrase, I recognize its meaning and the literary qualities it has. But I cannot find it in my own brain when I want to use it.

Venice, April 25.

With C. and the girls and H. F. B. to "Mefistofile" at the Goldoni Theatre. I liked the Opera greatly this second time. But I do not yet feel inclined to write about it. The reminiscences of Wagner (Preludes), Mozart and Gounod (garden scene), Gounod (*motif* of the infernal horses, prison scene) the Gavotte (Classical Sabbath), are a trial of my faith in his creative power. Boito does not use the themes of other men in his own style—but changes his style to theirs—so that there is a frequent sense that he is choosing this or that manner to write in, as the most effective for the situation. A feeling of its being artificial work, mosaic, is communicated.

And yet he has great originality in the music for Mefistofile himself (the *reo mondo* especially), in the first song of Margaret in prison, and the duet "Lontano." Also he carries his own mood of conception through all the alterations of style, and appeals to previous musical associations: he is not the disciple of any school; but is eclectic, combining Wagnerian orchestral climaxes with the orthodox finales of the Italian opera. In all things he works like an intelligent, self-conscious, erudite and highly sympathetic artist.

His intellectual grasp on the libretto and its content, his careful balance and interweaving of melodic suggestions, the thoughtful elaboration of each detail, and the connection of every filament and tissue by proper

accentuation and repetition of motives; all this proclaims him a great master—but does not somehow indicate the spontaneity of initiative genius. And still there is Boito all through.

What he deals best with is Faust's aspiration toward the Ideal in the *milieu* of the Real—the lyric cry which runs through Margaret's episode. He has not the same grasp on the Ideal, when this is imperfectly realized in the Helen episode.

Boito has done well to omit Goethe's odd conception of Faust rescued by Margaret's intercession in heaven, and "das ewig weibliche." I do not know what Goethe meant. There is no reminiscence of Margaret's *Leit-motiv* in the final vision which ends Faust's life.

Venice, April 26.

The intelligent, attentive enthusiasm of the audience interested me greatly last night. There were a whole lot of sailors, Royal Navy, regular bluejackets, in the stalls, the *scanni* and pit. Most of these read the libretto and followed the plot and music with grave sympathy.

219.—To H. F. B. *Munich, July* 5.

Madge and I had rather a weary journey to this place—a day and a half. And at the end of it we found that the object of our pilgrimage, Mr. Richards, was laid up with ice bags on his chest; the result of excitement at escaping from Davos into his old artist-haunts rather than of any organic disturbance.

All the same I felt very blue. For my only reason for coming here, as I told you—and I always speak the truth about my reasons for going to places, though people don't believe me, because I generally find so much to do in them which I did not go for—my only reason for

coming to Munich was to study the modern German school of painters at the Exhibition, under his guidance.

Speaking broadly I hate Munich, and have hated it ever since I first saw it in the summer of 1860, when I wrote a dismal emotional poem among the willows of the Englische Garten. I had not then, nor in many subsequent visits, learned to mitigate its blatant pedantry and priggishness, its air of a small slice of culture-butter spread very thin over a huge expanse of German *natur-schwarzbrod*, the hollow, unsubstantial, imitative, mediocre art of the place in flagrant contrast with the dull Bavarian plain and the honest Bavarian bumpkindom. The Munich Bier-Kellers are colossal; and the whole *genial* life of the place throbs in them. More than 2000 people crammed together in the Löwenbräu, listening to the Würtemburg military band, is a sight to see, as much as can be seen of it through the tobacco smoke. We are in a small pension—the very temple of the bourgeois. We have seen and are going to see oceans of works of art, old and new. I must confess that the more I see of these things the less I care for them. The old Greek statues and the old pictures are always interesting, with a certain pallid Elysian glow about them dimly reminding me of the passion they once inspired. The modern work is far more refined, delicately perceptive, true in method, sincere and modest, than it used to be. But it has no ideas, no centrality of inspiration, nothing but common-sense and good method. These people, sculptors and painters, try at least to get close to nature. But nature eludes, and is better to look at than their work. And they put no passion, no emotion, no religion, no ideality into what they do, to make up in some sort for their conspicuous inferiority to nature.

220.—To H. F. B. *Davos, July 22.*

Our railway was opened on Sunday—great festivities in horrid weather—and it works now, as if it had been going all the century.

We have the Henry Sidgwicks staying here and Miss Poynter. Lord Langton and a Cambridge friend are coming on Thursday. So all the resources of the house are strained. The Sidgwicks are in excellent form, and I learn much from them.

Oscar Wilde sent me his novelette, "The Picture of Dorian Gray." It is an odd and very audacious production, unwholesome in tone, but artistically and psychologically interesting. If the British public will stand this, they can stand anything. However, I resent the unhealthy, scented, mystic, congested touch which a man of this sort has on moral problems. He and a good many other people have written applausively about my "Essays." But I have seen no reviews yet.

221.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Dec. 15.*

It is nine days now that I have been here, and never a cloud. Very cold at night. Ruedi came to see me yesterday. He says there is still serious mischief in my lung, quite enough to account for the physical weakness and other things I complain of. From time to time at night I tear myself to pieces with fits of the most frightful coughing, which leave me almost helpless, and shaky all the following day.

I do not think I was cut out to be loved; admired, liked, befriended, run after—*si, pur troppo*—but love is something else. I often think it is that I do not know how to love. No animals or birds take fancies for me, "nor women neither." "Are the souls so too, when they depart hence—lame and old and loveless?"

I am intoxicated by your phrase about Pennance Cove. What is there in the nerve-value of a phrase? I believe that phrases carry with them sometimes whole moods and spiritual effluences of the man who makes them. You will think me pretty mad. Yet I am writing on a cold morning, before the sun has climbed the Jacobshorn, in my cave of care—care-haunted study—after a strange night of fever. And out there—on the void infinite, the unexpected, unexplored, intangible—what is to become of a soul, so untameably young in its old ruined body, growing hourly more impassioned as life wanes! Well: the sun has reached the crest and is flooding my table with heat and light. It is 10.20 a.m. Good-bye.

222.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Jan. 7.* [1891.

I went last night—what is rare with me—to a concert at the Kurhaus; and what is rarer still, I went in a mood sensitive to music. I heard a young American, called Lockwood, play one of Beethoven's pianoforte Concertos. I am going now to set down the thoughts which came into my mind.

The pianoforte, in contrast with a full orchestra, brings up before our picture-making brain a crowd of images. Here are some which came to me. I seemed to see and feel a rill of cold pellucid water flowing unharmed and unresolved into steam-particles, athwart hot masses of ebullient lava; or moonlight glancing over a great pyrotechnical display above the sea at Naples; or the bluish beams of *Aurora Borealis* palpitating upwards through red oceans of the trembling Arctic lights; or sprays of alamanda flowers detached upon a background of burning taxonia stars and bunches of flushed Bougainvillæa bloom smothered in veils of woven

verdure. But Beethoven had the power to make the pianoforte capable of symphonious effects. He brought the cold, pure water-rill, the moon's frigidity, the pale auroral pulse, the amber bloom, into vital art-relation with volcanic forces in his sympathetic orchestra, with the gloom and glory of intercepting, sustaining tones from wood and brass and string, with tumultuary colours tossed from clustering volumes of contrasted, intertwined, and interpenetrating instruments of throbbing sound. Beethoven, first of modern masters in the poetry of tone (unless peradventure Weber broke the path as a pioneer before him), gave its right place to the clavier among the organs man has fashioned to translate his soul's emotion into music. He brought the pianoforte's specific quality into relation toward those elder and more potent instruments of metal, wood, and string. He made us feel it as a liquid, candid, self-eliminating, self-detaching spirit—a spirit fit to raise its voice of clear transparent utterance among the host of congregated soul-compelling, sense-subduing, force-evoking *daimons* of the orchestra. Not indeed as a seraph to command, but as an angel to be loved and tended by them, to evoke their sympathy and their collaboration—standing the while somewhat aloof, though still with kindred feeling, as the pure soul of woman or of saintly man stands in the turmoil of the world, and adds a clarity of accent to the concert of contending cries and hymns and groans and passions.

This is a dithyramb. But it is good, in our old age, to have the dithyrambic stuff still left in us. And, as is usual with me now, everything poses itself before me as a problem. Last night the problem was: how can that poor instrument, the clavier, be made to play its part against and with the violin, the hautbois, and the rest of them? In a sort of emotional or Bacchic way I seemed

to find the solution. At all events I felt the Concerto, though Mr. Lockwood is not Anton Rubinstein and the Davos band is not the Philharmonic orchestra. Last time I heard it, I had Rubinstein at a Philharmonic meeting. But I do not think I got the same thoughts. Moral: to be grateful for the least; and to bless God for undiminished sensibilities in the *Götterdämmerung* of old age.

Jan. 8.

I did not finish this yesterday—and I doubt whether it is worth the postage stamp. Am I going to form a third manner, as you predicted? The prospect of Michel Angelo makes me wonder as to how I shall do the style part.

223.—To H. F. B. *Davos, March 6.*

I wrote you a rather snappish letter to-day. But to-night I am softer-hearted. Sad too: life is failing me.

Harry Strachey has painted a picture of "Football" on a Somerset meadow, full of the *aura*. Do you know what I mean by the *aura*? His picture I am going to buy. It is in the key of Tuke's work but not artistically so strong. A very refined sense of beauty in it, all the same. Of course I have only seen the photograph.

Talking of football, my M. A. studies led me to read through the poems of "Il Lasca" again. I find there a *Capitolo* on football with this passage in it on a scrimmage—

> "Ma il bello è quand e vengono alle prese
> Che van sossopra, onde si veggon spesso
> Otto o dieci persone in terra stese," etc.

Grazzini was a delightful writer of pure Tuscan; and this passage seems to me deliciously *naïf*.

R

224.—To H. F. B. *Davos, March* 8.

Carolath * brought me a wild poem written by him on "The Death of Don Juan." It is extraordinarily in the key of Roden's work. There is one magnificent image in it. Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, meets Venus by the roadside. She brings to birth twins, Don Juan and Faust. That is to say: the eternal restlessness of the human spirit, forcing eternal beauty to work its momentary assuagement, begets the lust of the flesh and the lust of knowledge. Do not you think this, in its naked bareness, a fine conception? It seems to me awfully true.

225.—To H. F. B. *Davos, March* 10.

I have written almost the whole of the first chapter of my Michel Angelo, and an important passage on his poems. In fact, if I were to stay here, I should probably steam ahead till I was worn out. It seems very difficult to make a new Life of this man *fresh*. But I am doing my best; and I think I shall clarify the whole liquid of his biography. A laborious analysis of his correspondence brings many things to light; and I find, as usual, how very casual are Italian scholars. Cesare Guasti, the editor of the *Rime*, did fairly good work. And Aurelio Gotti, the biographer, is conscientious. But for Milanesi I do not think I can find eulogistic words: yet he is the man who edited the Letters, and whose edition of Vasari is our *codex receptus*.

We shall not be leaving this yet. Davos is horrid just now. I have to shut myself up and work—about nine hours a day. I am willing to put this strain upon my nerves, feeling that a good bit of work done on M. A.,

* Prince Carolath-Schönaick.

and the style of my book settled, will justify me in taking a holiday and looking round for impressions in the region of my subject. The older I get the more I am a machinery of nerves and vehement sensations. Where will it all end? Do not mind these reflections and questions. The little Etna is in momentary eruption.

Get hold of Rosegger and read his "Wald Heimath." This is one of the real books written in the last half-century. You may not be attuned for it. But if you want the sincere poetry of peasant-life and a pure soul, you find it there. It cools me every night.

I close this letter because I am going into the theatre at the Kurhaus. Amateurs give three plays, in German, French, and English. The last is Mrs. Curtis's "The Coming Woman," and I want to see this. If I enjoy it I shall write to her.

Strange, wild, feminine letters from Ulrichs;* torrents of letters from the friends around W. W., expecting his death; letters asking for money—they snow upon me. Why in old age do we get so much together?

226.—To H. F. B. *Firenze, April 27.*

It is difficult to imagine worse spring weather than we have had. Cold winds, dust, damp, rain, *scirocco*, by turns; and sometimes apparently all together. I caught a bad cold and went to Poggio Gherardo to recruit. I came back yesterday rather better.

I have not yet got access to the Archives. It seems far more difficult than I was led to expect. Probably, if I do get permission, I shall not be able to use it till the autumn. Meanwhile I am translating a good many of M. A.'s letters in Milanesi's edition, but not working hard.

* Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, "Numa Numantius"; author of "Inclusa, etc."

On Wednesday I hope to take Madge and Lina Duff-Gordon to Lucca, Pisa, and Siena. We shall be out about a week; and soon after our return to Florence I hope to set off for Venice.

Tuke's letter I return; it is very nice, and the impression of the Winged Genius jolly. When that drum from Ephesus first was found, how the figure thrilled me! Just for the reason Tuke gives. It is so flesh and blood.

I cannot yet get Verlaine's "Poems." He, I think, must be rather of the sickly school. The last line of his sonnet to Parsifal, fine as it is, looks like it:

"Et oh! ces enfants chantants dans le chœur"!

227.—To H. F. B. *Firenze, May* 1.

I am getting along very much to my own discontent and with considerable danger to my health. I have an awful cold which I cannot shake off; and yet I do not like to leave Florence without having had a go at the Buonarroti Letters. The permission has come: "Valuable for two months." Still I fear I shall have to go away before I do anything. We went last Saturday to Siena. I thought the finer air would do me good. I think it did. But I proceeded on Monday to Montalcino (a quite divine upland city, crowning slopes covered with venerable olive trees and orchards and vineyards, and commanding that vast Tuscan plain with all the hill-cresting towns and Monte Amiata to supply the final accent: excellent country inn, good food cooked by the landlady, and a wine of first rate quality, both red and white: no objects of art interest except one Luca della Robbia in the whole place)—well, I went there on Monday in great heat, came back yesterday in a deluge of rain followed by cold wind, and went to the theatre at night. I was ill enough this morning.

228.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Aug.* 23.

I suppose you are not coming to-day. So I hope "fervet opus." I did a good day's work yesterday. Then came a night of uproar. The Landammann invited me with others to play hosts to the officers. It went off well on the whole. But I thought the Landammann's wine bad. And the Swiss officers are, I think, less well bred than the Swiss peasants or artizans. But they had all marched over the Strela yesterday, and you know what sort of a day it was. They had the right to take their ease in their inn.

The Sidgwicks are coming on the 30th, Margot on September 5th, R. G. a little later. You must come up and see some of these folk. I think you would like the Sidgwicks best.

My article on the Turnfest at Geneva came in proof last night. I expect the thing will only puzzle the general reader. I read a phrase of Thoreau's the other day, to this effect: "Do not look for inspiration unless the body be inspired too." That is what I feel about the effect of the passions upon the intellect. It puts sanely before you, what I wanted to say. But I doubt whether I am right in thinking that this inspiration of the body is a source of mental excitement in the way of work for all men.

229.—To H. F. B. *Firenze, Oct.* 13.

I have been working pretty hard at the Buonarroti Archives, which come to me at the Laurenziana. About four hours a day. But I have to stop to-day as my eyes gave way. I hope to read through the whole of the inedited correspondence of diverse persons addressed to him. It consists of six big folios. Three I have already

pretty nearly done. There is a German called Frey * working on the text of the Rime. He hates me, and tries to keep all the MSS. to himself. It is really very annoying. We have to use the same index to the Codices, which causes a perpetual rub. It is odd how suddenly and totally the restrictions on the Archives have been broken down.

230.—To H. F. B. *Roma, Oct.* 30.

I am getting accustomed to this *Caravanserei* and falling back into the old bad habits of my youth, and accepting the fate of infinite waiters in black swallow-tails.

I have had a long day at M. A. B. The Capitol, S. Pietro in Vincoli, Palazzo Farnese, Cristo Risorto at the Minerva, Pietà, and general structure of the church at S. Pietro, S. Maria degli Angeli. As an architect, the man is incredibly unequal, a veritable amateur in this branch, as he always said he was.

The weather is very trying. After enervating *scirocco*, we now are suffering a strong frigid *tramontana*. Rome was brilliant enough to-day, but cruel in its coldness. The city has altered immensely since I was last here—about six years ago. The old quarters are in ruins, being rebuilt after a Haussmann fashion. A great deal of its charm has disappeared: that ancient suavity which brought its various aspects (Republic, Imperial, Mediæval, Renaissance, Baroceo) into harmony: that is gone for ever.

The Rome I loved in 1863 is lost. But I cannot deplore change when change means prosperity. Does it so here? The Ludovisi Villa has become a nest of bourgeois habitations. The Palazzo Borghese was shut

* Prof. K. Frey.

when I went there to-day to visit the "Bersaglio" of M. A. B., because of the Prince's bankruptcy. Rising nations pull through. I hope this is the case with New Italy. But I see little of real wealth about. The faces of the shops in the vast new quarters are poor, like stores set up by squatters in some Californian mining station. They have opened a new museum in the Baths of Diocletian. I could not get in to-day.

231.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Nov.* 20.

7.30 p.m.

You are having the same change of weather as we are here. It is very mild. At the same time it is well that I am here. Davos is safer than Venice, and I have had a sharp warning. I have not been out of doors since I arrived here last Saturday.

The time is spent oddly enough. I begin work at 9.30 and go on till 12.30. After lunch, at 2.30 I go to bed and sleep two hours; have tea in bed and talk to my wife. Dine at 6.30. Begin work again at 8 p.m. and go on with it till 1 or 2 a.m. Then to bed and sleep again.

I have written a difficult chapter here upon the Sistine and M. A. B.'s design-conception of form in general. Of course I had brooded over this during my Italian journey. Now I am tackling his architectural work at S. Lorenzo and the Medicean Sacristy.

Madge acts as my secretary all the forenoon. She copies out the quotations and translations from M. A. B.'s letters. (Ronald always calls him "Mab," and Angelo * calls him "*il suo vecio.*") She is getting through all the chapters under my dictation, and I think she likes the work. There will really be very little of importance

* Angelo Fusato, Symonds's Venetian servant.

when this last æsthetic chapter and the copying are finished. The routine suits my health. I feel already to be better, with more power of breathing in the lungs.

Nimmo showers gorgeous editions as gifts upon me. I found a select cabinet-library awaiting me. Among them a very interesting thing by Pollard, on "The Title Page," full of facsimiles. Should you care to have a copy of the last "Hobbyhorse"? It has an essay by Pollard on the ugliness of Greek type, I think—(I forget), and an "appreciation" by me of Tiepolo's "Last Sacrament of S. Lucy." I will send you one if you like.

12.30 a.m.

Since I wrote to you at 7.30 I have been pounding on at "Mab"—the difficult chapter (xii.). It will be the novelty of my book, and certainly in Florence a rebuke unacceptable to Florentine scholars. I am going to dedicate the book to Biagi. But, I suppose, as it is not in Italian, they won't care. They are to blame for nidificating mares' nests with eyes open to the truth. The stupidest thing a fellow can do.

To-night I enjoyed rather a grand piece of translation —the peroration of Varchi's discourse on M. A. B.'s philosophy of Love and Poetry, winds up with a sonnet, very learned and difficult in style, but so much less trying than the effort to grapple with one's own sincere feelings about things like the Laurentian staircase.

Angelo was so nervous and giddy in the dome and on the top of S. Peter's that I trembled for him. I thought he would faint or throw himself down. And yet he is so strong and impervious to things which thrill me. I could stand tip-toe on the very summit of the Cross upon St. Peter's if it were wanted.

232.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Jan.* 12. [1892.

Your last letter was interesting, except for the bad news about the health of people. I have rather a bad account of my own to give. Ever since M. A. B. was off my shoulders, I have been drooping; and it is now serious. I cannot encourage you to make plans for coming here yet awhile. I am fit for little, and, when Warren goes, I feel as though I may have to go to bed and stay there some time. The matter is extensive bronchial trouble. My own fault. When I feel well I will not live as befits a damaged man of fifty-one. And so I have to pay heavy bills from time to time. Now good night.

233.—To H. F. B. *Davos Platz, Jan.* 15.

I am still what I must call ill. I don't know what I have written to you lately. The days and nights go by as in a sort of dead dream. A letter of the 22nd comes to me from you to-night, and I am glad to see you are working at the "Calendar." I feel sorry for my Venetian friends, who seem to be doing badly now, with influenza and the winter season. But I hope that most of them will pull through. They have at least health and manhood. It strikes me that nobody ought to complain who has these things: in my present lack of them, all else seems worthless.

I sent you the little book by Lefroy you write of.* I thought I had told you about it in a letter. It struck me that his views about friendship would suit you, as they have done. The dead man speaks to me in his verse and in his prose. I want to diffuse his influence, it is so good and true. I mean to write about him, when I am less a wreck.

* E. C. Lefroy, "Counsels for the Common Life."

Walt Whitman, from his death-bed, sends me the final edition of "Leaves of Grass." It is a beautiful book. I will procure you a copy. At last his life-work reaches a form, in which it will snuggle to a man's breast and lie there—what he always wanted. Poor Whitman! He is dying hard. They cablegram to me from Camden almost daily. All of him, but his *heart*, is dead. He lives and lives and longs for death.

234.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Feb.* 14.

I wrote you a letter some nights ago, which I kept back, thinking no news better than what I had to give then. But I will send it, since it thanks you for your offer to come here, which touched me. I hope you will come before the winter is over. Things are going more happily with me at last. In the first place my health is certainly improved.

The whole thing is trying enough. And yet I do not think I should have wished God to make me other than I am. He justifies His ways to men by leaving them contented with a puzzled page. He helps them, too, by nature's gradual process of killing, stifling, numbing.

Of my book, I have five chapters out of fifteen in proof. I cannot judge the work. I only see that it combines more of the "grubber's" industry with more of recklessness in language than anything I have published.

Nature is very interesting here this winter. We are shut off from the whole world, except by one-horse traffic with Klosters. Avalanches descend. Eggs have ceased to be purchasable. I sent notes about the snow to the the *P.M.G.* which perhaps will be printed and you will see. I walk two or three hours a day, visiting various points of interest.

The snow has reached such a point of width and

depth now that no figures are of any value. We simply wallow in it. I employ two men daily (for the last ten days) to keep the access open to the house, and prevent the burying of the whole up to the second storey. In the basement they burn lamps by day.

This is a rest; as storms at sea have been a rest before to me. Nature annihilates the petty grievances which conscience weaves. Is this the reason why sailors are so humane? Good night. Late as usual.

235.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Feb.* 23.

I thought I would just stipple to-night a few things casually to restore the tone which has been strained.

I was greatly interested by your jottings about the Princess of Montenegro's funeral at Venice. It was as if I saw it all. Glad too that this emphatic recognition of her worth and rank was given. She had a great deal to bear, I fancy, in her subdued and impecunious life at Venice. Olga will appreciate the honours paid her mother, though she may wish that a little more of the world's sunshine had cheered her while yet living. She was a fine and brave and I believe a large-hearted woman.

We are living, after our enormous snowfall, in a state of continual thaw. You can imagine that the snow begins to look unbeautiful and draggled. It has shrunken, and lost its colossal plastic outlines.

I get a daily letter from New Jersey, U.S.A., about W. Whitman. He lies, dying hard and gradually. His devoted friend there, Horace Traubel, writes. Seems to hope against hope for a recovery, which could be only temporary. I wonder what the meaning of this clinging on to life is, in persons who surround a death-bed? Is it callousness in myself which makes me rather, in these circumstances, pray for a speedy despatch, a *euthanasia*,

when the whole sad scene would not have to be over-acted again?

Most remarkable fragments from Lefroy's correspondence are being sent me by his friend and literary executor, Mr. Gill of Magdalene College, Cambridge. Lefroy disliked my attitude, and published a discourse against it, which Gill has also sent. I feel that if we could all be made like Lefroy, we should get just what I desire. I have printed an Essay on Lefroy's sonnets for the *New Review*, which may appear next month. If you are not here in March I will see to sending you a copy. I think he is a real discovery.

Robinson Ellis has translated into Latin elegiacs four sonnets of my "Stella Maris." He is going to send them, and says I may pass them on to Ulrichs to print in "Alaudæ." * How oddly the whirligig of the world moves! Ellis says he thinks "Stella Maris" "*very* fine," but cannot follow the drift of the emotion. But suffers and submits to it. And so he, I, and Ulrichs meet in a Latin Version of my verses.

I heard a young German violinist, Krasselt, to-night play Bach's supreme Chacone extremely well. It was a real *κάθαρσις τῶν παθημάτων*. If we could hear Bach and Händel, and a dessert of Gluck, every day!

M. A. B. goes on, and costs me about five hours a day labour on proofs. I change my views about it. I do not think I was made to do what I have tried to do—to be what Nimmo calls exhaustive. Now it seems to me that I am demonstrating what is a truism—viz.: "l'art d'ennuyer est de vouloir tout dire," also that *πλέον ἥμισυ παντός*.

Well: we shall see. In doubts about one's life, one's work, one's method, one's principles, one's practice, there

* "Alaudæ," a news-sheet published in Latin at Aquila, by Ulrichs.

is always *living*. It is a sign of not being dead, to doubt and be discomfortable.

Now, I have stippled enough. I could go on all night. But I only wanted to give a "*Stimmung*." "Screw thy divine theorbo two notes lower," not higher, or shriller.

236.—To H. S. *Davos Platz, March* 4.

I am fascinated by Myers' treatise on the Subliminal Consciousness. I doubt whether he himself suspects how far the hypothesis involved in his argument carries. Rightly, he confines himself to proof or plausible inference from more or less accredited phenomena.

I could talk more than it seems convenient to write, upon the deductions and corollaries which must ensue from this doctrine, if it is established. It will prove a great prop to Pantheism, the religion of the Cosmic Mind.

Life wears away here, much as usual. A great deal of book-producing. Catherine has edited two volumes of Miss North's "Autobiography," with great success, since the new year: an edition of 1350 copies sold already, and another of 1000 in course of printing. A French translation of my book on Dante, revised and partially re-written in the French speech by myself, has burst on Paris during the same space of time. My daughter Madge and I have brought forth a volume called "Our Life in the Swiss Highlands." And lastly, there are the two heavy volumes of my "Life of Michel Angelo," under which burden the press still groans—and I groan; praying daily for deliverance.

If it is at all virtuous to make books, then Am Hof, Davos Platz, may smirk! A cottage, 5000 ft. above the sea, hemmed in by avalanches, drowned in snow-drifts,

has not often furnished a record of six volumes between January and April. My M. A. B. still lags a little. But the MS. is right enough and in the printer's hands.

The man is ill and tired, after all is said and done, and cares little about what he does or does not do in life. The parable of Ixion was not a bad one: except that it was devised for Hell: whereas it suits phenomenal existence here more nicely: perhaps this *is* Hell. We go round and round, turning our phrases, polishing our rhymes, committing our aimless follies, doing our senseless acts of charity and benevolence, buying, investing, squandering, swilling, a dismal merry-go-round upon wooden hobby-horses in the artificial light of a Fair which does not deserve the name of Vanity, rather of Commonplace. *Everybody does the same. There is no difference of values in lives.*

237.—To H. S. (*Chur*), *June* 26.

It was very rude of me not to answer your kind letters about coming to meet Arthur Balfour at Cambridge. I should of all things like to know him. As a matter of fact there was no chance of my being in England so early. But this did not excuse my neglect. It can only be explained by the extreme weariness which my book on Michel Angelo, dragging on through the final stages of printing, produced in me.

I hope to get to London about the 17th of July, and then to go down to Oxford, where I have promised to deliver an inaugural address on the hackneyed subject of the Renaissance. I have just succeeded in screwing the lecture out of my reluctant mind. I cannot say anything which I have not said before.

If I get to England, I shall try to stay there till well into autumn. I do not want to begin another book of

any great importance, though the time will probably arrive when I shall begin the History of Graubünden. Meanwhile I am going to put a volume of Essays together, perhaps too another volume of verse! I have been touched and gratified by the decided sympathy shown for my more personal and autobiographical work on the "Swiss Highlands."

Lotta is in England, Madge with Countess Almorò Pisani on the Paduan plain, living a semi-princely life on a huge estate, and enjoying herself. I am at the top of a mediæval tower in the Bishop's Palace at Chur, 150 ft. above the town, with all the Rhinethal at my feet. I am going back to Davos to-morrow.

238.—To H. F. B. *Davos, June 28.*

I paid my bill (a mere flea-bite, 23 frs. 10 cts.,) and got off all right, with the knave carrying my portmanteau on his back. I had a pleasant journey, and fraternized with an Italian from Verona (elderly, handsome man, look of probity and prudence), who sells lemons about this land. I would not have mentioned him, however, except that he tells me he has set up a little shanty for the sale of fruit and liquors at Landquart, and that the wine comes to him direct (he says) from Valpolicella. It struck me you might like to taste Veronese in a strange land. You must ask for Francesco Campagnari: or "der Italianer mit der Weinschenke in dem Wald."

My portmanteau appears to have lost itself at Klosters. You will sympathize. It has my *Lecture* (on Culture) in it; of which there is no copy; and all my keys. I am sanguine, however, that it will turn up.

The two $\left.\begin{matrix}\mathrm{C}\\ \mathrm{K}\end{matrix}\right\}$atherines are gone up into the glaciers. So I find myself alone here, and am smoking an Indian

cheroot from the Missionshaus Basel. It is not equal in flavour to Cotton's. But the 100 cost 8 frs. I intend to make a considerable purchase. As I promised, I will send you a sample or two down, of the best I discover, with prices. At present I have only lighted the first. A list of nine sorts ranges from frs. 4.50 to 8.50 *per* 100. *Est-ce possible?*

I enjoyed myself at Chur and am all the better for my two walks with you. Here it is too lonely for a healthy life, I get sunk in sloth—with *tempeste.*

I am enamoured of the Tower. "You damned luxurious mountain goat," you, living there at 4.50 frs. *per diem*, when it costs another 15 frs. at least to carry on existence in a Zürich inn.

I wrote the fifth sonnet of my series coming up to-day. Shall I send you them? I think not. My verses must be very bad, because none of my friends like them. And I think the reason of this is, that they do not like my quality of feeling. I enjoy your verses, and Pinkie's, etc., although of course I know that they are only mediocre as art. In the region of writing we are thinking of now, all turns on personal flavour. *N'importe.* I will go on writing, because I am sure that I love, in my way, and love finds a voice of some sort. I have no pretension "to dine late." Has proud, poor Landor ever really dined at all? Ghosts do not dine. He hardly in fame even.

I will send you some new photos of myself, unbearded. One is decidedly good. It has the merit of psychological veracity, this photograph.

The world is worth living in. How pure the air is to-day, how light, how keen the sun, how tender, wonderfully green the meadows and the little boughs! Passionately beautiful our world, and all that moves in it; and blessed be every man and child. Only we must

go—just when we have learned to love the whole dear thing, and to take its disagreeables calmly.

239.—To H. F. B. *Am Hof, Davos, July* 3.

I do not want to send you any more of my verses. I can always tell you what I think. But verse is form. I hope this will not prevent you from sending me what you write. About twenty years ago I used to show my verse productions to Henry Sidgwick and F. Myers. I discovered that they were curious about them on account of what I said, but did not like the form. So I stopped doing so, and there has been no interruption of the freest closest exchange of thought and feeling. Henry is only a little plaintive when "Vagabunduli Libellus" appears, and I do not send it him, and will not discuss it with him. But he has made the situation. It is easy enough to do without a man's sympathy, but difficult to go on seeking it and not getting it.

Like many better men than myself, I suppose that I have fallen between two stools in art. My own dearest, nearest mode of self-expression is verse, and the indulgence of that has interfered to some extent with the development of my power as a prose-writer. But it is clear, I think now, that nature did not endow me with the poet's gifts. At least not with the gift of making my song acceptable even to my comrades. When that is said, the case is desperate! And if I must sing, I will sing to myself and God, not to you and Henry and F. M. It does not matter a bit. We are all going to die soon, and we can all love each other apart from words. I notice that even the omnivorous Ronald does not catch on at my verse. What a funny thing it is to be so eager for sympathy in what apparently one cannot get the trick of, and yet, after all, to feel sincerely that the

matter is one of real indifference! Life, life, is the thing. I believe the most vital forms of character are in perpetual antagonisms.

July 4.

A long letter came last night from Dr. Durm about the Cupola (of St. Peter's). It convinces me that he is right, and that the third inner shell *is* in the model. I have this morning rewritten the chapter. The whole thing is still very strange. For Stillman keeps sending me excellent testimonies to the contrary. It shows how difficult it is to see accurately, unless you measure by millimetres. My life is pretty full of incidents in this small way. It is such a relief to have no huge piece of literary work on hand. And yet I liked to get back to M. A. B. this morning.

I go on writing to you. I wonder whether I shall send the whole budget, or put it in a drawer! There was also a *Turnfest* in my *Verein* yesterday at the Waldhaus, part of which I saw. Fairly good.

July 5.

I am glad you had such a good time at Lenz. Zola's book * is grand but fatiguing. I agree with you about the passage on friendship. The ending is exceedingly dramatic.

240.—To H. F. F. *York, Aug.* 5.

When I arrived here late last evening, about 9.30, the first person whom I saw after Lord Carlisle's greeting, was Gray Tylecote. There is a cricket match on to-day.

At Oxford the junction with Ronald and Hamilton Aidé was effected. The Ranee could not come. We went to Stratford-on-Avon, and stopped in the house of the local magnate, outside the town—Mr. Flower, with

* "La Bête Humaine."

four handsome sons—"Angeli non Angli." A terrible hard day of sight-seeing it was. Indefatigable Ronald poked us into everything and presented us to everybody. He is a sort of local Genius, and his monument on the brink of the Avon is really a fine thing.

There we slept, and yesterday came on here, lunching at Birmingham, seeing the Minster and dining at York. The drive in a dog-cart through three miles of park was very impressive. At the end of it, the lake under a low large moon, and the vast pile of this Vanburgh Palace, enormous with its flanking wings produced to form a court, and the high central cupola. At the top of the flight of stairs in front of the grand entrance stood a servant-girl in black and white, and behind her Lord Carlisle, very white and aged and round-shouldered. They had one bedroom candlestick between them. The house, lighted usually by gas, is now obscure, except by day; and any one who loses his way in it by night is lost. George Howard told us a story of John Bright at Chatsworth, talking to Lord Northbrook on their way to bed, and abusing all the Governors and Viceroys of India. L. N. got cross, and said "good night" suddenly, and left Bright alone in the labyrinth without a clue. He slept—or did not sleep—at last upon a sofa in the billiard-room. Castle Howard is full of very interesting things: immense masses of family portraits, and some fine pictures, a few good pieces of sculpture. It has a lovely chapel.

There is no wine, and there are no men-servants. Nothing more concentrated and real in the shape of its aristocracy can be imagined—more diffuse and ideal, I should say, than the democracy of its present owners.

Vanburgh designed Castle Howard. It is rather larger than Strà,* lighter in style than Blenheim. Its

* The Pisani Villa on the Brentà near Padua.

position on a vast park of very broken ground, surrounded by grass terraces with statues and balustrated staircases into the gardens, is splendid.

241.—To H. F. B. *Carlisle, Aug.* 12.

I got your first letter from Wiesen. It was pathetically interesting to me in this alien life. It gave me *heimweh* for the hills and Alps.

I read a book, type-written, by R. G. at Castle Howard, on Joan of Arc, quite ungrammatical. It is fine in chivalrous spirit and glow of feeling, the outcome of snorting aristocratic-democracy, that funny modern *mélange.*

Howards and Gowers, Cavendishes and Grosvenors, Campbells, Egertons, coagulated in one slab mixture, stick together in a castle of more than Lucifer's pride. Somehow or another, here and there, they show their cloven feet. It is "we" against the world; too great, too luminous, to care about distinctions, secure in "our" impregnable and unapproachable superiority.

242.—To H. F. B. *The Glen, Innerleithen, N.B., Aug.* 17.

I wrote you last, I think, from Carlisle, where I was doing business. It gave me a great deal of trouble. But now I feel I have moved a considerable way forward in my plans.

On Saturday we moved to Naworth, which is, as you know, one of the finest inhabited feudal Castles of England. It is just on the English side of the border, and from its battlements one looks across the Roman Wall to the rolling hills and Cheviot range. The castle is built on the edge of a deep glen. This ravine is filled up with splendid trees, in the way of Nightingale Valley,

but more so. I thought your glen must be like it. The weather was very stormy. All night "the wind was roaring in turret and tree." Melancholy and sombre. Sleep fled. There is a great courtyard like a college quad. Indeed if Castle Howard is as large as Blenheim, Naworth is at least as large as Merton. And such a hall, emblazoned with such arms. Fitzalan, Warren, Plantagenet, Dacre, Greystoke, Cavendish, De Valence, and I cannot go on. As at Castle Howard, we lived poorly in the midst of it all. Carlisle said he had put me into a little room next Morpeth's to save the servants, as there was only one chamber-maid. It was a little slip room, and all its cupboards were filled with clothes, china, books, papers. Angelo put my things out on the floor. Of course there are between forty and fifty state bedrooms, gorgeously furnished and adorned with rare engravings and water-colours or old portraits. But it is not the habit of the Howards to live into their splendours. The house, in addition, overflows with curious books and lovely pictures. The Giorgione *is* a Giorgione, no doubt, and a gem. It is a grave bare-headed knight, bearded and ruddy, clad in the rich shining mail Giorgione loved, having his corslet braced up by a lovely page with deep green sleeves, downcast eyelids, and just the faintest film of a moustache upon his upper lip. There is a very good Signorelli, and the best Mabuse in existence. Plenty of Holbeins, Mores, Knellers, Lelys, Sir Joshuas. Carlisle collects books and engravings. He must spend a great deal of money on them. Their parish church is part of the ruins of Lanercost Priory, and a fine spacious early English building, which the Howards got from the Dacres.

I came on here on Monday. This house is flowing with wine and food and flunkeys. Margot is, as usual, nice and clever. The house has lots of good modern

pictures. A lovely unfinished oil picture by Walker, with a boy in it who dangles naked legs over the steep side of a running stream.

The glen is like a Scotch Val San Zibio, if you can fancy that. A hollow, *perdu* in the hills, filled in with cultivated lawns and gardens—and the pretty Frenchy modern house, which has its own coquetry.

243.—To H. F. B. *Basel, Sept.* 23.

I came from London through the night, and am spending the day here. The relaxation of nerves which comes when one has had a very lively time, out of the common run, and returns to familiar scenes and things, is upon me. People, I expect, always feel limp, disillusioned, craving after something different from what they have just left, and from what they are going back to, at these moments. To-morrow I am bound for Lausanne, and then again for Davos.

My M. A. B. is just out. I hope the illustrations will not look as bad as I feared. In England I saw "In the Key of Blue" through the press. I suppose it will be out soon. I have got the "Studies in the Greek Poets" with me to prepare for a new edition. If I come to Venice next month, I must try to do something at that book.

It is fearfully muggy and depressing at Basel, as if the dregs of a whole summer of thunderstorms and *scirocco* were in the air. I have slept like a pig and run down like a top all day. Reaction from the high strain of my life in England, I suppose.

I saw a good deal of Pinkie and lunched with C——, who has one of those odd Scotch faces like a very whiskered cat. My old Harrow friend Sir Charles Dalrymple had one.

244.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Dec.* 20.

We are having the most extraordinary weather I ever knew here. Day after day, night after night, the sky flames with sun or stars. It freezes, but so temperately that one wants no extra clothing and sleeps well under a light coverlid with open windows.

There is a thin but very hard snow-road, so that we toboggan with unparalleled rapidity. The last four days have been spent in that exercise, principally on the Klosters road. I ran to-day from Wolfgang straight into the village of Klosters in 18½ minutes. The sunsets are extraordinarily fine. But, for all these things, the dryness and tension make me feel brittle.

I have just finished my study of W. W. It will have, I think, to be printed as a separate little volume. "In the Key of Blue" is said to be coming out on the 22nd. The cover is pretty—hyacinths and laurels by Ricketts. I wish "Venetian Melancholy" had been in time for insertion. Of course that is a loaded colour-sketch, and over-loaded. I don't want to recall the lagoons precisely. I have used them as a theme for words—the background to a mood. But I think the gems are over-done. It amuses me now to try different ways of reaching the same result by language. Such experiments of necessity carry with them something of artificiality. But the artificial can always, if one chooses, be rubbed out. The true thing is that without art we do not gain effects, which at any rate will be permanent.

245.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Jan.* 17. [1893.

We go on having the same hard open weather with intense light. It is trying to the nerves. I have reason to be anxious about my brain just now. I have very

curious sensations in it, which seem to show that there is something wrong. I do not work with vigour or contentment. I wish I could go to sleep like Endymion, and not wake up till my head and eyes were refreshed. But it is too late to hope for rest in this life.

Jan. 18.

This day has taken away from us Katharine; and my wife is gone with her as far as Zürich.

"Quomodo sedet sola civitas!"

I wish I could write well to you again, as I used to do. It seems—I think because I am devoted to no work—it seems that I am devoid of ideas. I am full only of wants, which are shadows, till they get filled up with energy. Preludings to fresh upheavals of volcanic vigour?—Not impossibly. It sounds a little thing: but I am sorely exercised upon the question whether I ought to undertake a new literal English version of the "Decameron." John Payne did it, not long ago, affectedly, euphuistically, in false archaistic diction. Of course I could do it in a smooth and vivid style of to-day. But is it right for me to translate these indecencies into my mother-speech? In my capacity of artist I don't mind. The indecencies do not disgust me. But is it wanted? So easy to begin to do it, and become engrossed in it, and bring another splendid book out on Boccaccio, and spread myself round again upon the field of Italian masterpieces! So easy. Yet is it right, is it what I ought to do for myself first, for the world next?

I would give the balance at my bankers' for six weeks of profound health-giving sleep. Worry, worry, no exit from worry. Not a good thought in me but what gets corroded by the devil of unrest.

246.—To H. F. B. *Davos, Feb.* 22.

Last Sunday night I was lying awake, thinking of death, desiring death, testing the energy of my own will to seek it, when lost in this sombre mood, to me the bedroom was at a moment filled with music—the "Lontan, lontano" from Boito's "Mefistofile" together with its harp accompaniment.

On Monday I went by train to Chur. Yesterday I drove in the post to Thusis, leaving Chur at 5.10 a.m. The dawn at Reichenau was wonderful: crocuses, irises, and Corot: shy colours and luminous transparencies. I found Thomas at Ems, brought him back to Chur, was elected an Honorary Member of the Gymnastic Clubs of the whole Canton, and had a tremendous drink with twenty-eight stalwarts from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. Came up by train to-day, after seeing the Hofkellerei and the Cathedral bathed in tearful sun and wandering snow-flakes.

"Lontan, lontano!" has not left my auditory sense yet—stays behind all other sensations—and seems to indicate a vague and infinite, yet very near . . .

247.—To R. L. Stevenson. *Davos, Feb.* 24.

My dear old Friend,

After all these years, since that last sight of you in Bournemouth, I come to write to you. How strangely different our destinies have been! Here I am in the same straight valley, with the old escapements to Italy and England, with the regular round of work—I forget how many books I have written since we conversed; and I do not want to record their titles. You have been thrown into such very different scenes—and a sort of injustice has been done to our friendship, by the wistful-

ness I have for all that South-Sea life. Not that I am unhappy. I have found a great deal of happiness by living with the people here, though it is chequered with disappointments and pains.

I sometimes think I may still set sail, an old Ulysses, for those islands of magic charm. But I am past the age of doing more than dream of them.

A curious sense of being drawn to you is on me to-night. Partly because I read to-day news of Lloyd's going to Trinity. Partly because I found time, first, to-night to read your book on the disturbances of Samoa—that magnificent chapter on the Hurricane.

My inner life, in these nine or ten years of our separation, has been the most eventful that I have gone through. But of this I cannot write. To write well from Davos to Upolu about burning points of experience is more than a sensitive soul can do. It is like screaming secrets to a vast void filled with listening unsympathetic ears.

I never pass your châlet without thinking of you and Mrs. Stevenson. Give her my love. I think often of a dream she dreamed about me—and has probably forgotten. As far as health, etc., goes, we are not otherwise than prosperous.

If this ever reaches you, think of me not unkindly. I will send you a little "Study of Walt Whitman," which I have just written, when it comes out.

"Lontan, lontano"—that duet in Boito's "Mefistofile" with its dropping accompaniment of deep harp-notes, is in my ears—"Lontan, lontano"—Addio. A rivederci mai?

P.S.—I have just written your address. Will Samoa find you in the universe? *

* The letter was never sent.

On April the 19th, 1893, Symonds died in Rome. He was buried near Shelley's grave in the Cemetery of Caius Cestius. In 1883, just ten years before his death, he had sent to Mrs. Curtis at Venice the following sonnet prefiguring his own last resting-place :—

"A View of Rome with Violets in the Foreground.

A bunch of violets plucked from Shelley's grave,
Or from that lowlier resting-place where lies
The dust of Adonais 'neath blue skies,
Shadowed by wind-stirred pines that toss and wave.—
Fit foreground these for dome and architrave,
Bridge, fortress, temple, tower, which memories
Of soul-subduing Rome eternalize,
And tawny streams of old-world Tiber lave.—

Not all the purple pomp of ancient Kings,
Consuls acclaimed by hosts armipotent,
Cæsars upborne on Victory's golden wings.
Augusti girt with war's paludament,
Popes at whose feet the prone world tribute flings,
Are worth one poet's song, one violet's scent.

J. A. Symonds, Davos Platz.
Dec. 26, 1883.

To Mrs. Curtis, thanks for a card sent from Rome which suggested these lines."

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